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Charlemagne (Charles the
Great) the hero of two

Heroes of the Nations

EDITED BY

Evelyn Abbott, M.A.

FELLOW OF BALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD

FACTA DUCIS VIVENT OPEROSAQUE GLORIA RERUM.—OVID, IN LIVIAM 265.

THE HERO'S DEEDS AND HARD-WON FAME SHALL LIVE.

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THE LATERAN MOSAIC (ALEMANNI'S RESTORATION).

St. Peter hands to Leo the pallium, to Charles the banner of the City of Rome. The appended inscription reads thus: "Beate Petre, dona vitam Leoni Papæ, et victoriam Carulo regi dona."

(*From Vétault's "Charlemagne."*)

CHARLEMAGNE

(CHARLES THE GREAT)

THE HERO OF TWO NATIONS

BY

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FELLOW OF ALL SOULS COLLEGE, OXFORD
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PREFACE

IN the following pages I have endeavoured to give some idea of the first Western Emperor's personality and influence upon European history. I have limited myself, in dealing with institutions and social and literary developments, to those facts which seemed to throw light on his career. The exigencies of space have, however, compelled me to restrict these studies of his background within narrow limits. I have, throughout, based my narrative on a study of the chronicles, diplomata, and literature of the period. In matters of chronology I have followed the valuable *Annalen* of Richter (Halle, 1885); to which and to the more extensive work of Abel and Simson I am greatly indebted in other ways. In interpreting the authorities I have freely availed myself of the standard authorities in English, French, and German. In particular I may express my obligations to the works of Waitz, Muhlbacher, Gregorovius, Döllinger, Fustel de Coulanges, Haureau, Viollet; and among English writers to Dr. Mombert, Mr. J. Bass Mullinger, and Dr. Hodgkin. When I began this book I did not know that Dr. Hodgkin was already in the field. Since completing it I have consulted his biography, published in

the Foreign Statesmen Series, and in one or two cases have thankfully accepted his opinion. I trust that my book, since it approaches the subject from a somewhat different point of view, will not be considered as challenging a comparison with the work of so illustrious an authority.

To Mr. C. W. C. Oman, Mr. C. Grant Robertson, and the Rev. H. Hensley Henson I must express my most grateful thanks for their invaluable assistance and advice. It is, however, only fair to these gentlemen to state that they are in no way responsible for any errors of fact or style in the following pages.

All Souls, December, 1898.

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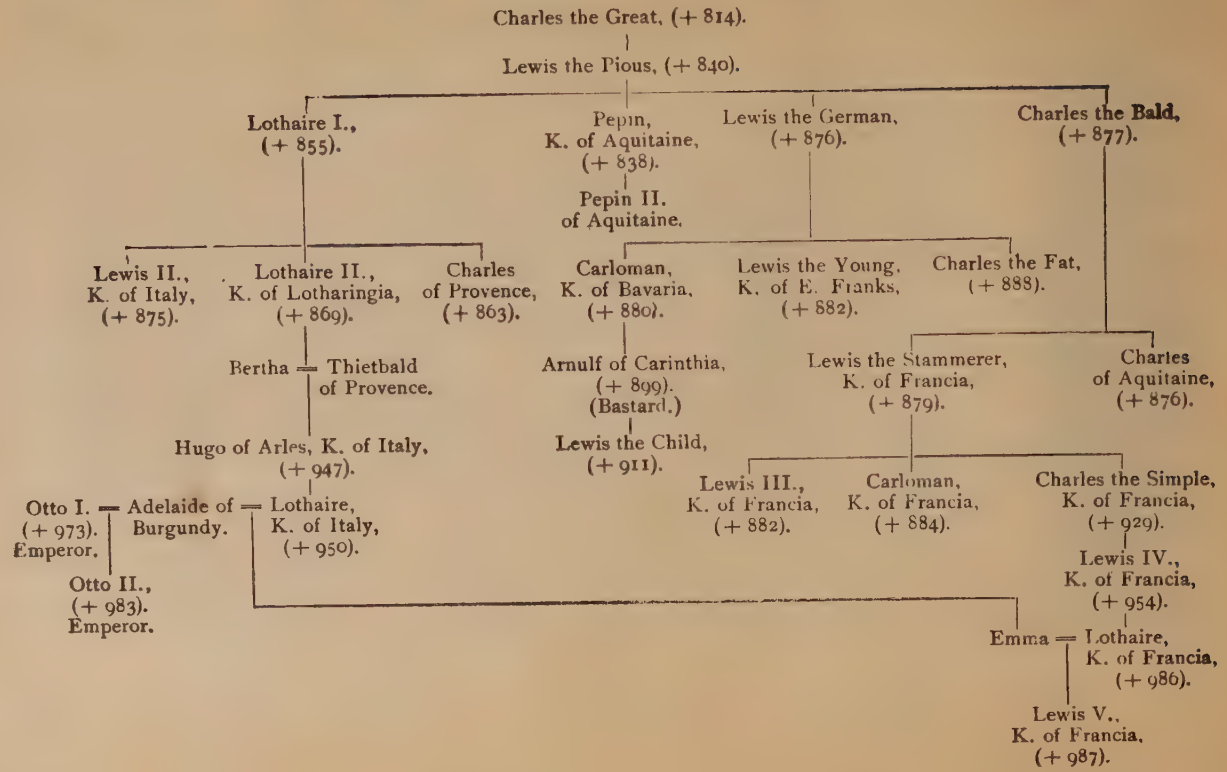
Charles the Great, (+ 814).
Lewis the Pious, (+ 840).
Lothaire I., (+ 855).
Pepin, K. of Aquitaine, (+ 838).
Lewis the German, (+ 876).
Charles the Bald, (+ 877).
Pepin II. of Aquitaine.
Lewis II., K. of Italy, (+ 875).
Lothaire II., K. of Lotharingia, (+ 869).
Charles of Provence, (+ 863).
Carloman, K. of Bavaria, (+ 880).
Lewis the Young, K. of E. Franks, (+ 882).
Charles the Fat, (+ 888).
Bertha
Thietbald of Provence.
Arnulf of Carinthia, (+ 899). (Bastard.)
Lewis the Stammerer, K. of Francia, (+ 879).
Charles of Aquitaine, (+ 876).
Hugo of Arles, K. of Italy, (+ 947).
Lewis the Child, (+ 911).
Lewis III., K. of Francia, (+ 882).
Carloman, K. of Francia, (+ 884).
Charles the Simple, K. of Francia, (+ 929).
Otto I. (+ 973). Emperor.
Adelaide of Burgundy.
Lothaire, K. of Italy, (+ 950).
Lewis IV., K. of Francia, (+ 954).
Otto II., (+ 983). Emperor.
Emma
Lothaire, K. of Francia, (+ 986).
Lewis V., K. of Francia, (+ 987).

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

768	Sept. 24.	Death of Pepin. Accession of Charles and Carloman.
769		Charles conquers Hunald of Aquitaine.
		First Capitulary of Charles.
770		Reconciliation of the brothers. Charles marries Desiderata.
771		Divorce of Desiderata. Charles marries Hildegarde.
	Dec. 4.	Death of Carloman. Charles sole King of the Franks.
		Flight of Carloman's family to Pavia.
772	Jan. 24.	Death of Stephen III.
		Didier supports the sons of Carloman and invades the Patrimony.
		Appeal of Hadrian to Charles.
		First Saxon campaign. The Irminsul destroyed.
773		Vain attempts to treat with Didier.
		Invasion of the Lombard kingdom.
	Sept.–Oct.	Siege of Pavia begins.
		Fall of Verona. Flight of Adalghis.
774	April 2.	First visit of Charles to Rome. The Donation.
		Fall of Pavia. Charles takes the title "King of the Lombards."
		The Saxons invade Hesse.
775		Campaign against the Saxons. Charles crosses the Weser. Westfali and Ostfali submit. Conversion begins.
776		Rebellion of Rotgaud of Friuli crushed.
		Saxon revolt. Charles goes to Lippespring.

776		Second submission of Saxons.
		Charles institutes missions and builds forts in Saxony.
777		General assembly at Paderborn. Witikind flies to Denmark.
778		Invasion of Spain. Charles reaches Saragossa.
	Aug. 15.	The rear-guard cut off near Roncesvalles on the retreat. Death of Roland and Eggihard.
		The Saxons rise under Witikind. They ravage the country to the Rhine.
779		Campaign against the Saxons. Victory at Bocholt.
780		General assembly at Lippespring. Division of Saxony into mission districts.
		Third visit to Italy.
781	March.	Charles and Alcuin meet at Parma.
	April 15.	Charles at Rome. Coronations of Pepin and Lewis.
		Betrothal of Rotrude to the Emperor Constantine VI.
		Tassilo of Bavaria summoned to submit. His appearance at the assembly of Worms.
782		Assembly at Lippespring. Saxony placed under counts. Capitulary "De partibus Saxoniæ" imposes the tithe.
		Revolt of Saxons. Simultaneous invasion of Sorbs.
		The Massacre of Verden.
783		Deaths of Hildegarde and the Queen-Mother Bertha.
		General rising in Saxony. Victories at Detmold and Osnabruck.
784		Saxon war continues. Charles takes the host to Saxony.
		He spends the winter at Eresburg.
785		Suppression of rebellion complete.
		Baptism of Witikind.
786		Conspiracy of the Thuringian nobles.
		Campaign of Audulf in Brittany.
		Fourth visit to Italy. Christmas spent at Florence.
787		Charles marches towards Beneventum. Submission of Areghis. He promises tribute.

787		Easter spent at Rome.
		The betrothal of Rotrude and Constantine VI. broken off.
		Second summons to Tassilo.
		March upon Bavaria from Worms. Submission of Tassilo.
788		Conspiracy of Tassilo with the Avars. His condemnation at Worms. Bavaria incorporated in Frankish kingdom.
		Invasion of Avars repulsed by Bavarians and Italians.
		Death of Areghis. Charles releases Grimoald his son and heir.
789		Istria passes to the Franks (approximate date).
		Campaign against the Wiltzes.
		Charles the Young invested with kingdom of Western Neustria.
		Quarrel between Charles the Great and Offa of Mercia.
791		War declared upon the Avars. Charles marches to the Raab.
792		Synod against Adoptianist heresy at Regensburg.
		Conspiracy of Pepin le Bossu detected. Trial and punishment of the leaders.
		Grimoald III. rebels. Unsuccessful campaign of Pepin and Lewis.
793		New Saxon rebellion.
		The Saracens invade Septimania.
		Charles abandons his projected campaign against the Avars.
794		Synod at Frankfort repudiates the decrees of Nicæa (787).
		Libri Carolini sent to the Pope.
	Aug. 10.	Death of Queen Fastrada.
		The King enters Saxony. Submission of Saxons at Eresburg.
795		North Saxony still in revolt. Charles goes to the Bardengau.
		The ring of the Avars taken by Eric of Friuli.
	Dec. 25.	Death of Hadrian I. Accession of Leo III.

796	July.	Charles in Saxony. Deports many rebels. Bridge built across the Weser.
		Pepin completes the destruction of the ring.
797		Lewis in the Spanish March.
		Charles in Saxony with the host. New deportations.
	Nov.	Charles returns to pass the winter in Saxony.
798		Outbreak of Saxony north of Elbe (Nordalbingia).
		Charles ravages the country between the Weser and the Elbe.
	Autumn.	Embassy from Irene. News of Constantine's blinding.
799	April.	Pope Leo attacked by Paschalis and Campolus. Escapes and joins the King at Paderborn.
	Sept.	Gerold of Bavaria slain by the Avars; Eric of Friuli by the men of the Istrian border.
	Nov.	The Pope sent back to Rome. Frankish commissioners arrest and try the conspirators.
		Submission of the Bretons to Wido.
		At Aachen Charles receives the first embassy from Patriarch of Jerusalem.
800	Spring.	Charles on the northern seaboard.
	May–June.	Visits Alcuin at Tours.
		Conference with Breton chiefs.
	June 4.	Death of Liutgarde.
	August.	General assembly at Mainz. Charles and his sons set out for Italy.
	Nov. 24.	Charles enters Rome.
	Dec. 1–23.	Trial and condemnation of the conspirators.
		Leo purges himself by an oath.
	Dec. 25.	Imperial coronation in St. Peter's. Charles the Young crowned as king (of Western Neustria).
801		Charles returns to the North.
	June.	At Ivrea he receives an embassy from Haroun al Raschid.
		Lewis in Spain. Capture of Barcelona.
		Pepin's army takes Chieti, a town of Beneventum.
802		Embassy from Irene. Charles replies, offering to marry Irene.

802 Oct.	Great synod and assembly at Aachen. Reform of clerical discipline. Codification of national laws.
	In Italy Pepin takes Ortona and Luceria.
803	Embassy from the Emperor Nicephorus.
Aug.–Dec.	Charles in Bavaria. Settles frontier questions.
804	Charles marches into Saxony. Final submission and settlement of the Saxons. New deportations.
	Sees of Bremen, Munster, Paderborn founded.
805	The Avars allowed to have a Khakhan.
	Charles the Young in Bohemia.
	Venice and Dalmatia place themselves under the protection of Charles.
806 Feb.	Provisions for the partition of the Imperial dominions.
	Campaign of Charles the Young against the Sorbs.
	An army sent into Bohemia.
	In Spain Navarre and Pampelona submit to the Franks.
	War with Eastern Empire in the Adriatic for Venice and Dalmatia.
807	Second embassy from Haroun al Raschid.
	Burchard the Constable defeats the Moors in Corsica.
	Venice forsakes the Frankish alliance.
808	Eardulf of Northumbria appeals to Charles and Leo for help.
	Godefrid of Denmark builds the "Danework."
809	Eardulf restored through mediation of Pope and Emperor.
	War with Eastern Empire continued. No decisive result.
	Ravages of Saracens on west coast of Italy.
	Charles attempts to procure peace with the Northmen.
	Building of the fort at Itzehoe.
	The controversy respecting the Nicene Creed with Leo III.
810	Reduction of Venetians by Pepin.
June.	Death of Rotrude.

?–? July.	Death of Pepin.
	The Danes attack Frisia. Charles marches out to Verden. Death of Godefrid.
	Peace concluded with Emperor Nicephorus.
	Truces (1) with El Hakem of Cordova.
	(2) with Hemming, King of the Danes.
811	Charles makes his will.
	Peace with Danes.
	Expedition sent into Brittany.
	Fleets inspected at Boulogne and Ghent.
Dec. 4.	Death of Charles the Young.
812	Recognition of the Western as coequal with the Eastern Empire.
	The Lombard kingdom given to Bernhard.
	Peace finally concluded with Cordova and Beneventum.
813	Settlement of succession.
Sept.	Coronation of Lewis the Pious at Aachen.
814 Jan. 28.	Death of Charles.

LIST OF CAROLINGIAN EMPERORS

Charles the Great,	800–814.	
Lewis the Pious,	814–840.	
Lothaire I.,	840–855.	Holds the Middle Kingdom.
Lewis II.,	855–875.	King of Italy.
Charles the Bald,	875–877.	King of West Franks.
Charles the Fat,	881–887.	King of Lotharingia (876). King of Italy (879). King of East Franks (882). King of West Franks (884).
Arnulf of Carinthia,	887–899.	King of Germany.
Lewis the Child,	899–911.	King of Germany.

CHARLEMAGNE

CHARLEMAGNE

CHAPTER I

EUROPE BEFORE CHARLES

IT is hard to picture the state of Europe eleven hundred and fifty years ago, when Charles the Great was a boy at his mother's knee. Since that date, even the obdurate facts of physical geography have been altered in themselves or in their significance to man. Provinces now among the most productive in the West were then clothed with dense forests or intersected by pestilent marshes. Mountains and rivers, which are now crossed daily and without effort by hundreds, then formed barriers rarely passed or impassable between nation and nation, between different communities of the same nation. Roads were few and seldom used for peaceful traffic: the fear of thieves and toll-collectors kept would-be travellers at home. Then, as now, a few of the great European waterways were thickly strewn with cities; but such public works and monuments as these cities could show were legacies or awkward imitations of Roman architecture and engineering.

Men came into the towns for purposes of refuge or of barter, to keep a festival, to hear a mass or a royal proclamation, to attend a monthly law-court; but their visits were occasional and brief. Tradition, convenience, and their own tastes kept them faithful to a country life: the plough and the sickle were the business, hounds and horses the recreation of every-day. All men lived by the land. Even kings studied the economy of their demesnes as minutely as the administration of their realms. A murrain meant privation, a short harvest brought the pinch of famine, untimely frosts or droughts were noted by careful annalists in the same register with the campaigns of emperors.

The minds formed by such a life are slow and heavy, suspicious of change, uninventive, unaspiring. The farmer is content to be no wiser and no happier than his forefathers. His ambition is merely to add field to field, his wisdom is to know the times of feasts, the signs of the weather, and the changing seasons. Fearing no competition, secure at the worst of a bare livelihood, he is independent of his fellows, indifferent to the mysteries of nature. His ideals, if he has them, lie behind and not before him.

To the men of the eighth century there was no golden age except that Roman Empire whose tongue was still used in their churches and law-courts, whose image and superscription still figured on their coinage, whose literature was the fount of inspiration at which their wisest teachers drank. They were blind indeed to the higher aspects of that Empire.

But their slow imaginations caught fire at tales of the Cæsars who had ruled from the Euphrates to the Pillars of Hercules, under whose protection merchants laden with treasure travelled securely over land and sea, and the children of the soil reaped where they had sown. For the recurrence of those Saturnian times they hardly looked. The Empire was no mere mortal handiwork. God had given and He had taken away. His blessing once withdrawn, the best and bravest of the Romans and of their own barbarian ancestors had vainly expended labour, thought, and life-blood to resist the inexorable process of decay: and how could the weaklings of the present rebuild what the giants of the past had been unable to uphold?

The Dark Ages mourned despondently over their own decrepitude. Their writers sighed for the vanished "youth of the world," when energies were fresher and the senses keener. However valueless in itself, every relic of that past was to be cherished for the great associations which it carried.

Most of all, the Dark Ages loved, as the sign and symbol of vanished unity, the old Imperial capital—"Rome the golden, Rome the mistress of the world." The eyes of all were centred on her, as something greater than the bricks and stones of her visible fabric,—as a living person, as an informing idea. To the popular imagination, the Eternal City seemed a keystone by which the physical world was locked together and sustained. A song of the eighth century foretells that,

"While stands the Coliseum Rome shall stand ;
When falls the Coliseum Rome will fall ;
With Rome will fall the universe and all."

More than four centuries had elapsed since Constantine transferred his Court and administration to the shores of the Bosphorus. In the interval Rome had sunk to the rank of a provincial municipality, important only as the capital of a Duchy which bore her name, and as the residence of the Western Patriarch. The sceptre of the civilised world was still claimed by the Emperors of Constantinople. Sprung from the loins of Isaurian peasants, Greek in their language and religion, Oriental in their pomp and statecraft, deriving their armies and their chief revenues from the hybrid races which fringed the shores of the Ægean and the Euxine, ousted from Spain and Africa by the Visigoth, Vandal, and Arab, from Gaul by the Frank, from Pannonia by the Hun, they were still the legitimate heirs of Octavian and Diocletian, of Constantine and of Justinian. In theory the whole of the Italian peninsula was theirs, and in fact, despite the intrusion of the Lombards, their garrisons held Venice and Istria, Naples, Sicily, Calabria, and (until 750) Ravenna. The Exarch-Patrician of Ravenna stood high in the Byzantine hierarchy, and represented in Italy the majesty of the Empire. The Popes, upon whom the government of the Roman Duchy had insensibly devolved, encouraged the fiction of Imperial sway, dated their charters by the years of the regnant Augustus, called the Patrician their patron, and affected to think their title insecure until that official had ratified the election in his master's name.

Thus the New Rome continued to cast her shadow over the Old. But the affections of the West remained unalterably fixed. In the eyes of Gauls and Italians, the Basileus and his subjects were simply Greeks of the Levantine type, a race which from the days of Juvenal onwards had found little favour west of the Adriatic. The supple manner, the materialistic temper, the reputed cowardice, and the undeniable bad faith of the Greek more than outweighed the respect which could not be refused to his intellectual superiority. History shows that the Byzantine Empire still cherished a saving leaven of the virtues ; that in her provinces if not in her capital were to be found frugality and fortitude, family affection and religious zeal, a belief in the high mission of the Christian State, a readiness to die in its service. Thus it was that Constantinople endured for centuries, interposing her power between Europe and the restless hordes of Russians, Bulgarians, and Saracens who threatened to overwhelm the infant civilisation of the West. In Asia Minor and in Thrace the Greek played a not unheroic part. But in Sicily and Italy, where he dealt with nations of his own creed, the seamy side of his character was turned to the light, and arts which had been legitimately used to hold the common enemy in check took an odious hue when employed in the cause of a merely selfish ambition. The events of the eighth century completed the alienation of the Greek from the Latin and Teutonic races. First came a religious schism. The iconoclastic fervour of Leo the Isaurian (740) struck no answering chord of sympathy in

Rome and the Roman Patriarchate. Shielded from the fiery scorn and insidious proselytism of Islam, Gaul and Italy reviled as a heretic the distant suzerain who would rob them of their holy images and pictures in order to remove a reproach of which they had not realised the force. A little later the Exarchate fell a prey to Aistulf the Lombard (751). The lost cities were soon snatched from the conqueror by Pepin the Short; but instead of restoring them to Constantinople the Frank gave them to the Pope for a Patrimony, and at the invitation of his protegé assumed the title of Patrician, which only an Emperor could rightfully bestow (754). The other Byzantine provinces trembled for their safety; as a matter of course diplomatic relations between the Empire and Papacy came to an end.

Relieved by these events from submission to any human superior, Rome and the Roman Patriarch were left to lead the opinion of Western Europe in all questions relating to the common welfare. From Rome had sprung those heroes who carried the *Pax Romana* over land and sea, and made the Mediterranean an Imperial lake. In Rome had suffered and were buried the martyrs by whose blood and tears the Empire had been won for Christ. In Rome was the shrine of Peter and the power of the keys to bind and loose. With the triumphs of the Cross over the Arian in Gaul and Italy, over Teutonic paganism in Britain and the Rhineland, the name of Rome was indissolubly connected. She was the Mother of Churches of God in all the world—so ran the swelling formula. Perhaps she might claim to be more

than this; perhaps the sword of the flesh no less than that of the spirit belonged of right to her. Even now the legend of Constantine and Pope Sylvester was on the lips of churchmen, and not in Italy alone. Imperial precedence in the West and a peculiar lordship over Italy*—such were the privileges which his spiritual guide was alleged to have received at the hands of the penitent Emperor. Therefore, it was argued with impetuous logic, no power, lay or ecclesiastical, could lawfully exist in the West without the sanction of the *Respublica Romana*—under which title were designated the Pope and those by whom the Pope was elected, namely, the clergy and people of the Roman city. It was a theory presenting obvious difficulties and lacunæ, destitute of historical foundation, not readily to be applied in the field of practical politics. Yet the very vagueness of it was a source of strength. Grave statesmen equally with the idealists of the cloister bowed the knee before it. It emboldened Pepin to chastise and Charles the Great to overthrow the Lombards. It gave to the Franks a bloodless victory over the Bavarians. Throughout the eighth century it was a constant factor in the diplomacy of Europe.

For this reason Europe might even then be regarded as one community, and not for this alone. Then as now her members were linked together by

* "Omnes Italiæ seu occidentalium regionum provincias loca et civitates." The Donation was drawn up in its present form in the latter half of the eighth century. It is mentioned as though well known in a papal letter of the year 776 (*Cod. Carolinus*, xlix.).

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affinities of race, of language, and of culture; in all but the first of these respects they approached more nearly than at any later period to an unbroken and monotonous uniformity. Latin was the only language of literature and ceremony. Laws, arts, and manners were universally permeated by a common element of Roman tradition; and the ruling races by whom this tradition was preserved all traced their descent from the same Teutonic stem.

But it was a community whose frontiers and internal divisions differed very considerably from those of the Europe of to-day. The Scandinavian lands formed a separate system: the heathen Norsemen were known in the south only by hearsay, by the border traffic of Frisian merchants, and by the occasional appearance of their long ships in the northern seas. South of Denmark the tribes of the Saxon confederacy filled Holstein and the country between the Rhine and Elbe. Pagans, like their northern neighbours, they had often been attacked from the west, but had saved their independence hitherto by meaningless promises of tribute. Russia, Germany east of the Elbe and Saale, Moravia, Bohemia, Poland, and Silesia were in the hands of the Slav—a mild-eyed people of shepherds and agriculturists who had followed in the rear of the migrating Teuton hosts to make a garden where the latter had found and left a wilderness. In Pannonia were the fierce Avars,—Mongols with flat noses and high cheek-bones, noted for their breed of horses and their archery, dwelling behind vast earthen ramparts from which they only issued forth to harry the Italian Marches or the lower

valley of the Danube. The Balkan peninsula at their backs was still in a state of nominal subjection to the Emperors. Nor could Spain be counted at this time as a part of Europe. At the beginning of the century she had fallen a prey to the Saracens, whom only the arms of Charles Martel prevented from extending their power to the Loire. She now formed an independent Emirate of which Cordova was the capital, and the famed Ommeiad dynasty the rulers. Christians there were indeed in Spain, but no Christian States except the little kingdom of the Asturias, which from the shelter of the Cantabrian mountains still held out the hand of fellowship to Gaul and Italy. Within this ring of foes and aliens there remained the whole of ancient Gaul, the greater part of Central and Southern Germany, and, with the deduction of the Byzantine outposts already mentioned, the Italian peninsula. Few provinces of the Roman Patriarchate were more renowned than England for orthodoxy and for intellectual culture. Her merchants travelled to Gallic ports, her pilgrims flowed in a continual stream across the Alps, to her missionaries more than to those of any other race was due the foundation of the German Church. But from the politics and general life of the Continent she held aloof; partly because of her insular position, partly because no one sovereign had yet united her provinces under an effective supremacy. Northumbria was falling into anarchy, Wessex was still inert, Mercian power had but recently commenced to assert itself beneath the unscrupulous leadership of Offa.

Two powers divided at this period the supremacy of continental Europe. These were the Franks and the Lombards. Their two kingdoms were founded within a hundred years of one another. Clovis, the first great leader of the Franks, succeeded to the throne of Tournai in 481; the supremacy of his nation over Gaul was barely established at his death in 511. Alboin, his Lombard counterpart, invaded Italy in 568; before the close of the sixth century the realm of the Lombards had well-nigh expanded to its final limits. Nor was the resemblance merely one of fortunes. Like the Franks, the Lombards were a Teutonic confederacy held together by the lust of conquest. Their original homes lay near together. The Lombards started from the Bardengau upon the left bank of the Elbe; the Franks, if our information may be trusted, from the sources of the Saale. In social usages, private law, and institutions, there was at the first a general similarity between them. But the difference of their languages was serious enough to prevent friendly intercourse and the free commerce of ideas. For a while, at the end of the sixth century, it seemed as though Lombard restlessness and the intrigues of the Empire would breed in the Frank a lasting hatred of his southern neighbours. The danger passed away with the fall of the Imperial ascendancy in Italy. But by that time the two nations had drifted apart: henceforth, severed by the gigantic barrier of the Alps, they developed each on its own lines. They were not eager for alliance, neither were they disposed to enter upon an active rivalry.

The Lombard and Frankish polities were to this extent alike, that in both the king was normally selected by the nation from the members of one royal house; in both the monarchy was circumscribed by the power of a territorial nobility; in both there were provinces whose population deeply resented their submission to an alien domination; in both the struggle between ruler and subject tended ever more and more to become one of Latin against Teutonic races. These general similarities were, however, qualified by important differences. Conformably with the rules of Teutonic private law, the Frankish kingdom not infrequently suffered a partition between the sons of the deceased sovereign, while that of the Lombards remained in theory one and indivisible. The Lombard, unlike the Frankish aristocracy, was purely secular; Arians until the eighth century, and even after their conversion jealous of the Church, the conquerors of Italy had never permitted their episcopate to become overpowerful. Again, north of the Alps there was not one aristocracy but several, each forming a closed circle, each belonging by birth and sympathies to one of the old kingdoms which the power of the Merovingians had absorbed, each claiming and not infrequently possessing the monopoly of office and honours within its native land; south of the Alps the ruling caste was throughout the peninsula homogeneous in origin if not in interests. The Merovingians had to contend with Bavarians, Alemannians, Burgundians, Aquitanians; the successors of Alboin with rivals of their own blood and speech.

In consequence the feud of Teuton and Latin took a different complexion in each of the two countries. The "Romans" of Aquitaine were autonomous and self-reliant; those of the southern Lombard duchies were compelled to pursue the prize of independence by pitting one clique of masters against another, by supporting their local tyrants against the lords of Pavia. The men of Southern Gaul had no allies; the men of Southern Italy found upon their borders the Byzantine power always ready to assist them. Hence the discontent of Aquitaine remained merely provincial in its significance; that of Beneventum and Salernum was from an early time complicated with the perennial feuds of Greek and Lombard, East and West. The dukes of Southern Italy, however tenaciously they clung to the Lombard dress and language, insensibly adopted the political and religious ideas of the Empire. Their principalities had been the outposts of Pavia; they threatened to become the outposts of Constantinople.

Such, then, were the powers in whose hands lay the future of Christian Europe. The year 750 closes the long period of their neutrality, and opens an intermittent struggle for ascendancy. The force which produced this change of policy was the Roman See, acting on the Franks by attraction, on the Lombards by repulsion. Circumstances had long been working to produce that alliance and that enmity. From the Franks Rome had much to hope, from the Lombards she had everything to fear. It is true that in Gaul no less than in Italy there raged a secular strife between the temporal and spiritual powers.

But in the Frankish kingdom the national Church alone was the object of attack. A large proportion of the soil had fallen into the hands of bishops and religious houses. Their gain was the nation's loss, since church lands claimed immunity from most forms of taxation and church tenants were in varying degrees protected from the jurisdiction of the ordinary law-courts. Hence ensued on the one side high-handed spoliation, on the other, acrimonious complaints. Charles Martel was the principal offender. He treated bishoprics as benefices of the Crown and did not shrink from instituting laymen; others of his faithful vassals were quartered upon the lands of wealthy abbacies as tenants with or without the payment of rent. The outrage drew down on his devoted head the anathemas of the Frankish episcopate, and the victor of Tours found himself regarded as the arch-enemy of Christianity. But in the eyes of Rome such robberies were a venial peccadillo. The Papacy courted the friendship of Charles Martel and invited him to take the field against the Lombard Liutprand. The crime of Liutprand was essentially the same as that of Charles; only the former had touched a different set of interests. For the special object of his avarice was the Patrimony of St. Peter, that vast nexus of estates, extending from end to end of Italy, which the piety of past generations had committed to the Roman See in trust for the churches and the poor. The difference was vital. In time the Carolingian House would propitiate the offended bishops; but the Lombards had aroused an enemy who forgot no-

thing and forgave nothing. The power of the Frankish Church interested the Pope only in a secondary degree; the schemes of Aistulf and Didier touched him to the quick. The spiritual sovereign of the West conceived an undying hatred for the Lombard, while he caressed the Frank in whom since the days of Clovis he had always seen a reverential follower. At a time when Rome could brand her foes as outcasts from the fellowship of Christendom and support her sentence by an appeal to Imperial no less than to religious tradition, the Lombards crossed her path and in doing so sealed the death-warrant of their nation. Retribution was delayed almost for a generation. The prudent Martel declined the office of executioner and remained on friendly terms with Pavia. His son and his grandson were more daring or less scrupulous. Pepin intervened in Italy, not once alone; the result was the formation of a Papal State which, reaching like the old Exarchate from sea to sea, formed as it were a wedge between the plain of the Po and Southern Italy (756). Charles also intervened; with what fortune will be told in the following pages.

The ultimate consequence of this alteration in Frankish policy was to make the Carolingian realm coextensive with Christian Europe; to quicken the latter community into self-consciousness; to concentrate her energies upon the "Drang nach Osten." The power thus formed had a brief existence; already in the tenth century we find that a multitude of small and mutually hostile States have arisen on its ruins. But the effects of its existence were lasting; it be-

queathed to the nations of modern Europe the sense of mutual obligations and responsibilities, of religious and political fellowship, which a thousand years of dynastic, racial, and commercial squabbles have not effaced.

The man who led the Franks to victory and so created modern Europe was Charles the Great. In the last resort it is true that national developments are independent of the individual's effort. But without Charles and the legend of Charles Europe would have had a different history and a different character. Her civilisation would have been more tardily matured, and would have lacked some important elements which it now possesses. Rightly did the cathedral-builders of the Middle Ages blazon the exploits of the great Emperor upon those buildings which symbolised their highest beliefs and aspirations. Rightly did the Catholic Church inscribe his name in the roll of those who had been foremost in building up the Kingdom of God upon earth. Nor did popular tradition err when it saw in him the originator of the Crusading policy which made Christendom the armed camp of the Church militant, when it traced back to him the beginnings of feudalism, of central power hostile to feudalism, of national no less than of Imperial aspirations, of the union between State and Church, of the wise jealousy of the State towards the Church. In his policy all these diverse tendencies were coördinated and harmonised.

The contribution of the Frank to modern civilisation is altogether spiritual and impalpable. Therein he differs from other conquerors such as the Mace-

donian and the Roman, who have left very visible traces of their footsteps in Europe and the adjacent lands. The Frank built no great cities, and left no enduring monuments of his presence. Nor, again, did he, like the Greek, enrich the worlds of art, of literature, of science. He found the material and the intellectual treasure-houses of mankind almost drained; his attempts to replenish them were crowned with small success. He claims our consideration solely as a statesman. And he is a statesman of a simple type. In the loftiness of his ideals Charles may bear comparison with Alexander and with Julius; in the adaptation of means to ends he is infinitely inferior to both. None the less his Empire will repay a careful study. It was no pale reflection of the Greek or Roman type, but a courageous attempt to solve a problem peculiar to the modern world. It is a Christian Empire; from one point of view a State, from another a Church; the supreme power of both kinds in the hands of one man. We cannot even regard it as a mere copy of the system established by Constantine the Great and his successors. With them a State already highly organised and well compacted added to her strength by donning a religious garb. Charles on the other hand found the Church towering in her pride above stunted tribal sovereignties; the peculiarity of his life-work is that he created a State by expanding the Church: that he fused together peoples hitherto loosely federated or independent of each other by making his power the representative of that religion which they held in common.

The kingdom of the Church militant was a conception older than Charles. It had floated before the mind of Clovis and many another conqueror. On a widely different stage it had been realised by Mahomet. Even so was the Pan-Hellenic idea older than Alexander, the cosmopolitan older than Julius. Like his predecessors, Charles took up and carried into execution the thoughts of other men. The highest powers of reflection and of action are seldom joined in the same person, and Charles was no exception to the general rule. It is sufficient credit for him that he grasped the best ideas of his time. In this respect at least he stands on the same plane with the great heroes of antiquity, and high above those conquerors whose guiding star was an intensely personal ambition.

COIN OF CHARLES.

(*Carlus Rex Francorum et Langobardorum ac Patricius.*)

CHAPTER II

THE FRANKS BEFORE CHARLES

400–768 A.D.

AS the reorganiser of Europe, Charles claims a place among the world-heroes; in him are incarnated that spirit of order and that solicitude for the general welfare by which the true statesman of whatever race and epoch may invariably be known. But these instincts, universal in their character, must work upon a material which is particular, local, temporary; the nature of the result is conditioned by the material. Nor, again, do the greatest of men stand outside the sympathies, the hopes, and fears of the generation which has produced them. The policy of Charles had its beginnings upon Frankish soil; the advancement of Frankish interests was the motive which started him on his career of conquest; and even after establishing an Empire which was the negation of nationality, he remained to the last a Frank of the Franks. The present chapter will therefore be devoted to a more attentive examination of the race among whom he was reared,

with whose traditions he was imbued, and through whose arms he triumphed.

The mechanism of institutions works behind the scenes of daily life, or at most furnishes forth an occasional interlude. Manners, language, dresses, features, are the first facts to engage the attention of a contemporary observer. He seeks for those more obvious peculiarities by which the people among whom he finds himself are distinguished from their neighbours. Such an observer would be sorely perplexed by the Franks of the eighth century. Between man and man he would find endless points of diversity, few similarities. The true Frank, indeed, who traced an unmixed descent from the first conquerors, was of the same type whether he dwelt in east or west, in Aquitaine or in Thuringia—fair-complexioned, yellow-haired, athletic, with long moustaches and shaven chin, dressed in a close-fitting tunic, sword-belt, and overmantle, with high boots and tight hose cross-gartered to the knee. But such Franks were rare except in the far east; west of the Rhine an observer would find a chaotic intermixture of races, some widely dispersed, some rooted to a particular district. India under British rule is the nearest parallel which modern times afford. As in India so in Gaul, the separation of races was recognised by law. However far a man might wander from the land of his birth, he religiously preserved the pedigree which proved his origin and entitled him to be judged according to his own national code. Only by such excessive respect for provincial susceptibilities had the Franks succeeded

in maintaining their supremacy. "You may see five men sitting together," says one of their writers, "and no two of them have the same law."

Among these minor nationalities no less than seven deserve a separate mention. (1) Between the Loire and the Garonne the Aquitanians, though exposed by their geographical situation to the attack of invaders from the north, tenaciously maintained their independence and the traditions of the Visigothic kingdom. The town of Saintes was the capital of a national duchy which, since its foundation early in the eighth century, had declined to recognise, save in the most general terms, the overlordship of the Franks. (2) At the time of the barbarian immigrations, the Burgundians had established in the valley of the Rhone a power which was at first more than a match for the disunited Frankish nation. Degraded by Clovis and his immediate successors to the rank of an under-kingdom, the Burgundian State kept the privilege of almost complete autonomy, and was but loosely connected with the central power. Until the time of Pepin, surnamed "of Herstal," it was ruled by mayors usually chosen from the national nobility. Even now the instinct of independence merely slumbered. The ninth century was to witness the establishment of a second and more celebrated Burgundian kingdom. (3) To the north of Burgundy and Aquitaine lay the province of Neustria, bounded on the west by the forests and marshes of the Breton border, and on the east divided from Austrasia and the true homeland of the Franks by the Scheldt and the upper

ЈМЕ OF A BISHOP OR ABBOT.

COSTUME OF A SCHOLAR.

(Fac-similes of Miniatures in MS. of the IXth Century, "Biblia Sacra," in the Royal Library of Brussels.)

course of the Meuse. Paris, the chief city of Neustria, was a favourite royal residence; the Neustrians had long identified themselves with the fortunes of the Merovingian family; their aristocracy was Frankish, although the bulk of the common people were descended from the Roman provincials. But the Neustrian Franks were eternally at feud with the Austrasians of the Meuse and Rhine. Their antagonism was a constant factor in the history of the Merovingian period and contributed more than once to produce important revolutions. There was one mayor for Neustria and another for Austrasia. The Carolingians rose to power by combining both these dignities in their own hands. (4) In the valley of the upper Danube the Bavarians constituted a well-organised state under the rule of the Agilolfing dukes. (555–788). This dynasty was bound to the Carolingians by ties of marriage and the oath of vassalage, but military service was often refused when demanded, and in regard to internal affairs the Bavarians enjoyed the most complete autonomy.* (5) The Thuringian Franks in the valley of the Main and (6) the Alemannians in Suabia enjoyed no such privileges. Their lands were parcelled into counties and formed an integral part of the Frankish realm. But these counts were generally of local families and showed at every opportunity a spirit of obstinate resistance to the royal supremacy. (7) The Bretons

* The Laws of the Bavarians, as codified and emended at some point in the years 739–748, expressly recognise the suzerainty of the Frankish King. But they remained a dead letter, although Tassilo (749–788) owed his duchy entirely to the friendly aid of the Carolingians.

had been, ever since the days of Dagobert I., (628–638), the nominal tributaries of the Merovingians. But they were governed by their own chiefs, paid tribute or not according to the circumstances of the moment, and appeared outside their own borders only in the character of border thieves.

Of these groups the three which we have placed at the head of the list were completely Latinised. The old provincial element in them had triumphed over the German invader. Their language was a patois of the Latin, their dress recalled the Rome, if not of Cæsar and Cicero, at least of Honorius and Arcadius. The heroes whom they remembered with affection were those generals who had made the last stand for Roman supremacy against the barbarian flood. Their private law was derived from a Visigothic revision of the Theodosian code; when we read their books of procedure we are reminded on every page of Gaius and Justinian. On the other hand, the next three groups were purely Teutonic. They were the latest conquest of civilisation, only converted to Christianity in the days of Charles Martel and Pepin the Short, and even now regarded as more than half barbarians by their western neighbours.

The Franks who gave their name to the realm in which these diverse elements were included dwelt in the third century along the central part of the Limes Romanus, the boundary between the Roman provinces and the free tribes of Germany. Their territory included Thuringia and the lands immediately to the west. It is conjectured that the nation was formed by the alliance of the Chatti, Cherusci, and

INTERIOR OF FRANKISH PALACE.

(*From Racinet's "Le Costume Historique." Firmin, Didot et fils.*)

other tribes who in the time of Tacitus occupied these localities. However this may be, the Franks showed little sense of union in their migrations. One horde called the Ripuarians settled, after the withdrawal of the Romans, in the Rhine valley between Coblenz and the sea. Another, called Salians from the river Saale which waters their first home, established themselves about the year 445 in and around the three cities of Cambrai, Terouenne, and Tournai, whence Aëtius the last of the Roman generals vainly attempted to dislodge them. Their leader was one Clodion; his successor was Merowig, the founder of the Merovingian dynasty. In the time of Merowig or shortly afterwards the three cities became the capitals of independent and rival states. Tournai continued to be the seat of the line of Merowig: and second in descent from him came Clovis, who, ascending the throne at the age of fifteen, made war upon his neighbours both Latin and Teutonic with such success that at his death he left the whole of Gaul to be partitioned among his sons. He had overthrown the lords of Cambrai and Terouenne, Syagrius the Roman governor of Soissons, Alaric II., the king of the Aquitanian Visigoths. He procured the murder of the Ripuarian sovereign and contrived to be elected in his place; he forced the Thuringians, the Alemannians, and the Burgundians to acknowledge his overlordship. The Franks produced no greater statesman before the time of Pepin the Short. In his acceptance of Christianity, in his alliance with the Roman See against the Arians of Aquitaine, in his efforts to pose as the heir of the Empire and the

guardian of Latin culture, Clovis showed a true foresight, an instinctive apprehension of the appointed mission of his race. The power which he founded stood the test of time. After his death (511), more than two hundred years elapsed before any Frank ventured to question the right divine of the Merovingian House. The lands which he welded together retained, despite frequent partitions and bloody civil wars, a strong consciousness of their political unity.

Until the middle of the seventh century the reigns of his successors were not uniformly inglorious; but living in a time when conquest was the breath of life to every nation, they did little more than maintain their frontiers intact. After Clovis three kings only enjoyed the sole authority. The last of these was Dagobert (628–638), the Frankish Solomon. For fifty years after his death all was division and decadence. Racial discords acquired new virulence; the nobles, released from central control, plunged into a career of rapine and interminable blood-feuds. The Church, while growing in wealth and territorial influence, became illiterate, immoral, immersed in secular politics. Art and literature were moribund for want of ideas. Commerce and industry languished owing to the general sense of insecurity. Agriculture was left to the serf and the small freeholder; famine and pestilence succeeding one another with frightful regularity proved how insecure had become the economic basis of society.

From this slough of despond the Franks and their subjects were extricated by the House of St. Arnulf. The rise of that House throws so much light upon

its later policy, and illustrates so vividly the condition of Frankish society, that we may be pardoned for relating it in some detail.

As the result of frequent partitions, the realm of Clovis became a federation of three minor kingdoms: *Austrasia*, which comprised the valley of the Meuse, the lower Rhineland, and of which the Frisians, Thuringians, Alemannians, Bavarians, were dependents; *Neustria*, whose sovereigns ruled the modern Isle of France with Normandy and exercised a precarious suzerainty over Aquitaine; *Burgundy*, comprising the lands between the Rhone and the Alps. The boundaries of the three kingdoms were ill-defined and fluctuated from reign to reign. In each, however, there were elements of unity; for each had a palace, the cradle of an inchoate bureaucracy; and in each the nobility were knit together by ties of marriage, by identity of interests, and by a common hatred of all foreign interlopers.

But there were degrees in these national jealousies. In Burgundy and Neustria the predominance of the Gallo-Roman strain produced a certain sympathy and a common hostility to the Teutons of Austrasia. Political alliance followed, and as the natural consequence, Burgundy, the weaker of the two, came in time to figure as the mere appendage of Neustria. In this grouping is to be found the first half of the later distinction between the French and German types. Nothing but the pressure of external forces—of the Visigoth and Saracen in the west, of the Saxon, the Slav, and the Avar in the east—preserved even at this date the original tradition of kinship. The

growth of the rift is seldom noticed by the chroniclers; they had not learned to study such phenomena. M. Fustel de Coulanges makes bold to argue from their silence that the process of separation had not yet begun. Such negative reasoning can, however, prove nothing to those who are not already persuaded, and in developing his thesis the ingenious author ignores two sets of facts: those which prove the antipathy of the Austrasian Franks for the "Romans" of the west; and those which attest beyond all dispute the wide divergence of the Romance and Teutonic types in the ninth century. The latter especially are fatal to his case. Nationalities do not develop in a few years or a single century; nor, in the earlier stages of development, can they fail to entertain at least a passive dislike for one another. It is not difficult to see the reasons which led to the divergence. The fate of the Merovingians was one which they shared with many less distinguished families. Transported into the heart of a comparatively luxurious civilisation they wasted their vigour in unbounded license, acquiring the vices without the virtues of their new subjects. Or they intermarried with the provincials and insensibly lost touch with the traditions of their ancestors. Meanwhile in Austrasia their kinsmen, pursuing a healthier and more national way of life—for even before the withdrawal of the Empire the German strain was already strong in the Rhineland,—kept their warlike prowess and increased in numbers. In the west the provincials outlived or assimilated the Frank; in the east the process was reversed and the Frank revenged.

It was in Austrasia and by the fusion of two Aus-

trasian families that the Arnulfings rose to power. Pepin "of Landen," * the founder of their greatness, appears under Clotaire II. as a trusted counsellor who, when his master reunited Neustria and Austrasia (614) became mayor of the Austrasian palace. He outlived Clotaire and died in 639, bequeathing his dignity to his son Grimvald. The latter administered Austrasia prosperously for seventeen years; but upon the death of Sigibert III. sought the Austrasian crown for his own son, failed, and was executed. His nephew Pepin, the grandson of Arnulf of Metz, inherited the lands and influence of Grimvald; and, during the interregnum which followed the death of the Austrasian Childeric II. (673), divided Austrasia with a certain Duke Martin. Ebroin, the greatest of the Neustrian mayors, warred against them, and Martin was slain (680). But the death of Ebroin in the next year left Pepin without a rival. By the battle of Testry (687) he became master of both kingdoms. Not daring to usurp the title of King, he maintained in Neustria a Merovingian prince whose name was solemnly used in the dating of charters, and who was produced before the people on occasions of ceremony. Eginhard has immortalised these phantom kings in a brief descriptive passage: "Nothing was left to the King except the name of King, the flowing locks, the long beard. He sat on his throne and played at government, gave audiences to envoys and dismissed them with the answers

* These familiar surnames of the early Carolingians do not appear in the chronicles of early date. They are derived from popular legends which we first encounter in authors of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

which he had been schooled, or even commanded to make. The Mayor of the Palace, one may say, pensioned him off with the royal title and the precarious boon of life; he had nothing to call his own except one estate of small value where he had a residence and a not very numerous retinue. He travelled, when occasion required it, in a waggon drawn by oxen and driven like a farmer's cart by a cowherd.* In this guise he came to the palace or to the annual assembly of his people. The mayor controlled the adminstration and decided all issues of policy at home or abroad."

Soon arose the desire to dispense with a fiction so unmeaning. Charles Martel, son and successor to Pepin of Herstal, allowed the throne to lie vacant for more than twenty years (720–742). Public opinion, however, lagged behind his wishes: a quarrel with the Church debarred him from obtaining a religious sanction for the projected revolution. Pepin the Short knew better how to wait his time. For ten years he acquiesced in the revival of the old dynasty. Then in 752 he put the question to Pope Zacharias whether it was not proper that the power and the right to rule should be united in the same person. The Papacy was eager for Frankish support against

* Eginhard errs in representing this as an indignity. Religious usage demanded that the King of the race should make his progresses in this primitive vehicle. The Merovingians were a national priesthood. Here also we have the explanation of their flowing locks and beard. The touch of steel—a metal unknown to the Frankish nation in its infancy—would have profaned their persons. Similarly the priesthood of ancient Rome were forbidden to remove the hair from their faces except with tweezers of bronze. (*Vita Karoli*, c. 1.)

Byzantium and the Lombards; nor could she be ungrateful to Pepin for the reformation of the Gallic and the organisation of the German Church. Zacharias returned a favourable reply: his successor Stephen journeyed across the Alps and with his own hands crowned Pepin and his two sons, Charles (the Great) and Carloman (July 28, 754). He consecrated them by unction with the sacred oil, and placed their line under the special protection of St. Peter. "The Apostolic enjoined the whole nation upon pain of interdict and excommunication that nevermore should they presume to choose their kings from any other family." Thus was inaugurated the Carolingian dynasty, ten years after the birth of Charles the Great, sixteen years before he commenced to reign.

The revolution signified the triumph of Teutonic over Latin ideas, of Austrasia over Neustria and Aquitaine. The genealogists of the ninth century affect to find an Aquitanian origin for the Arnulfings. But it suited the interests of Lewis the Pious to pose as a fellow countryman of his southern subjects; the facts so opportunely produced to assist him must be regarded with scepticism. And whatever may have been the ultimate origin of the House, the fact remains that from the beginning of the seventh century their estates, their influence, and their political interests lay in the lands between the Rhine and the Meuse. Prum and Metz, Stablo and Echternach, are the places with which they are connected by the evidence of their earliest charters. The starting-point of their power was the Austrasian Mayoralty; they occupied that position as the chosen

representatives of the most Teutonic clique among the Frankish aristocracy. Austrasia continued to be their usual residence; and here alone their authority was never disputed.

The policy tells the same tale as the antecedents of the House. Under their sway military service became once more the universal obligation of the subject. The annual meetings of the host for legislation and for war were revived. Once more as in the early days of the Franks the local authorities, the dukes and the counts, if not also the vicars and the hundred-men, figured as the captains of a national army permanently encamped upon conquered soil. The Merovingians had allowed the old institutions of the war-band and the benefice to be perverted from their original character, so that the "antrustions"* and the "faithful men" of the King claimed special rights without performing equivalent services, and estates granted conditionally for life were now regarded by their holders as absolute freehold. Here, again, there was a return to older ideas. The "faithful" must now serve their lord in court and camp; the beneficiary was sharply reminded of his precarious tenure. No effort was spared to swell the numbers of those bound by these personal obligations. Consciously or unconsciously there was a return to the organisation of the migrating horde where the allegiance of every important man to the general leader depends upon a special contract. In foreign policy there was the same respect for Teutonic tradition.

* The sworn "*comites*," or bodyguard.

COSTUME OF THE PRELATES FROM THE VIIIth TO Xth CENTURIES.

(From Miniatures in the "Missal of St. Gregory," in the National Library, Paris.)

The descendants of Clovis forgot his scheme of including all Gaul and Roman Germany within a single State. East of the Rhine they seldom ventured to assert themselves; Aquitaine slipped through their nerveless fingers. The new dynasty made it the first object of the Franks to retrieve these losses. Pepin of Herstal and Charles Martel waged many wars, but in almost every case they were merely reducing rebels from the Merovingian kingdom—Bavarians, Alemannians, Saxons, Frisians, Burgundians, Aquitanians. Even the campaigns of Charles Martel against the Arabs were purely defensive. To restore the frontiers of Clovis was his settled purpose.

The Carolingians were cradled in a Teutonic land and their early home left enduring traces upon their policy. But from the year of Pepin's coronation new influences came into play, and Latin ideas which, so long as they wore a Neustrian garb, had been rejected by the House of Arnulf received a ready welcome when proffered by Rome and the Roman See. The House did not cease to be German; in the routine of daily life and still more in the detail of administrative work it displayed a cautious and often unreasoning conservatism. The change was one of spirit more than of form. Wider ambitions, Catholic and Imperial aspirations, were grafted upon the ancient national polity, and derived new life from thence. The result is that after 754 the Franks begin to play a notable part in universal history; they undertake the mission of spreading over Europe a civilisation in which old and new elements are strangely fused together; they conquer Europe

and they govern it by methods which recall on the one hand Byzantium and the statecraft of the Cæsars, on the other Clovis and the ancient tribal constitution of the Teutons.

In the clash of races and in the mutual attrition of two different civilisations within the heart of one society lies the whole secret of Frankish history in general, and in particular of the events by which the Carolingians rose to power.

Yet lest the reader should fall into a very natural misconception, let us hasten to qualify one generalisation by another. From one point of view no society could have been more motley than the Frankish; from another we may say that none has presented a greater uniformity. Trifling differences of law, of idiom, of dress, abounded everywhere; but everywhere existed the same stage of mental development, the same religious creed, the same level of industrial skill and scientific knowledge. In consequence, the conceptions of the family, the state, civic rights and duties, were the same throughout the realm; the economic structure of society was inevitably moulded on one pattern. And while those who resort to history for a solution of modern controversies will prefer to dwell upon the anomalies and singularities of each racial group, the lover of the past for its own sake will rather turn with us to a consideration of the features wherein all were alike.

The main industry of life was agriculture. The unit of society was that group of landholders which looked to a single delegate of the King for guidance in all affairs of common concern. This delegate was

called the Count; he may be compared to the sheriff of the Anglo-Norman kings; he led the militia, administered justice, and collected royal dues. The province over which he ruled was called the *pagus;* like the English county it was often divided into hundreds (*centenæ*), and these were governed by petty officials who were known as hundred-men. The Frankish hundred-man may originally have been elected by the freeholders; in historic times he appears as the nominee of the count. His principal duty was to settle lawsuits of minor importance; an appeal lay from him to the count. The hundred again was divided into tithings or townships, and we hear at times of a tithing-man who divides with the parish priest the government of this little community. But these minor local authorities seldom appear in the pages of history. The really important magistrates of the *pagus* were the count and those persons to whom he delegated his power in special places or, during his absence, over the whole country; these latter were called vicars and viscounts, respectively.

The King's power was absolute in the sense that it owned no limits beyond those imposed by the pressure of factions and of public opinion as expressed in the council of the magnates and the assembly of the national host. The count within his limited sphere stood for the king and was responsible to the king alone. Still tradition demanded that in the administration of justice he should be guided by the "good and upright men" of his county. The law-courts which he held, now for the county in general, now for particular hundreds, were popular

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assemblies. A select number of those who attended the court heard the oaths of the parties and their friends, watched them through the ordeal, pronounced in their character of doomsmen (*rachimburgi*, *scabini*) upon the evidence, and found judgment according to the customary law. The count, in theory, acted only as their chairman and mouthpiece. We reserve for the present the question whether the reality corresponded to the theory; it is enough to remark that to the humbler freeman the *mallus* or law-court afforded his only sphere of political activity, and all the public business of the county was there transacted. It was at the *mallus* that new laws were proclaimed and accepted, royal dues assessed and collected, the time, place, and manner of military service announced.

The *mallus* was not an open-air assembly. The suitors met in a covered court-house, and the assembly of the whole county was usually held at the county-town. The existence of such centres need not surprise us. The most primitive society requires certain places of refuge; and the county-town was often no more than this. Many of those upon the frontiers, in Poitou and Auvergne, on the Breton March, in Hesse and Thuringia, are mentioned by name in times of disturbance. We find that they occupy sites which have nothing to commend them but their defensiveness. The chroniclers speak of them as "strongholds," "camps"; those of Poitou are styled "rocks and holes in the earth." But there were others of greater size and importance. West of the Rhine the *pagus* was frequently conter-

minous with a Roman *civitas*, and the county-town rose out of the ruins or within the battered walls of a Roman city. Such towns were often of considerable importance. Worms Köln, Trier, Metz, and Mainz in the east; Paris, Laon, Noyon, and Soissons in Neustria; Lyons, Marseilles, and Narbonne in the south, are names which frequently recur in the annals of the times. Some of them had enjoyed a continuous existence since Roman times; if legal forms and phrases can be trusted, a few in Southern and Central Gaul preserved some traces of the Roman municipal constitution. We hear of the *Curia*, or senate of the city; of the *gesta municipalia*, or archives; of the *defensor civitatis*, an officer instituted in the fourth century by the Emperor Valentinian. But it may be that the notaries to whom we owe these hints, in their anxiety to keep within the four corners of the Theodosian code, are using Latin words for Teutonic institutions. In any case, such survivals meant little; in the town as in the country the autocratic power of the count was over all. All the evidence goes to prove that for administrative purposes these towns were merged in the counties to which they belonged.

Of social life in these towns we know a little. The resident population can never have been large. Paris, the most important city of Neustria, never overflowed the narrow Île de la Cité, and was completely overshadowed by the royal "vill" and gardens on the left bank. At Aachen and at Ingolheim the palace was everything; the town is barely mentioned as its appendage. Laon and Soissons owed all their import-

ance to their bishops. In other places, as we learn from the capitularies, the counts were very much disposed to treat the towns as their private property and the townsfolk as their vassals. Hence the towns seldom or never play an independent part in the political struggles of the Merovingian period. Frequently we find in partitions of the kingdom that they are distributed among the heirs without the slightest regard to their situation or national affinities.

We discern, it is true, among the townsfolk a very general inclination to band themselves in guilds; and these fraternities are treated by the legislator as a possible source of political disturbance. But the objects of the guilds are by no means political. Some are societies for mutual assurance against fire and thieves, and shipwreck at sea. Others are for the charitable relief of the poor, of widows and orphans. Many are purely convivial. As a rule they had a patron saint whose feast-day they honoured with quaint rites and ceremonies, not always Christian nor tending to edification. These guilds lent colour and variety to social life. They might at times become powerful instruments in the hands of a discontented magnate. But it would be going too far to compare them with the communes of the twelfth century. The guilds of Gaul never attained to the organisation or the influence of those which, for want of a strong central authority, usurped the government of Rome at this period. The *scholæ* of the twelve regions and the five foreign colonies at Rome are, like the *militia* and the *duces* of the same

city, a unique phenomenon to be explained by the special circumstances of Italy.

The outward appearance of the Frankish town was not imposing. The documents lead us to imagine a network of filthy narrow lanes, swarming with beggars—not a few afflicted with leprosy and other loathsome diseases; here and there a juggler or a minstrel, or a hedge-priest mumbling the baptismal service over a new-born child; in the central square the court-house, and perhaps a romanesque basilica of stone with an adjacent monastery or bishop's palace; otherwise no public buildings except a lazar-house or hostel built by the charity of some neighbouring magnate; outside the walls a park or garden belonging to some great personage, and not seldom a sacred oak, or spring, whither the sick and afflicted come day after day to mutter charms and hang up their votive offerings.

Arts and industries were languidly pursued in some places. At Arras, Lyons, and Metz, jewels, brocades, and gold thread were manufactured. The goldsmiths of Limoges, under the patronage of St. Eloi, formed an ancient and famous corporation. Armourers and smiths were everywhere in request; but the extraordinarily high price of their wares proves that the demand outstripped the supply. Commerce flourished to some extent in the towns of the Mediterranean littoral; they exported oil, wine, cattle, and too often Christian slaves, to Constantinople, and the marts of Spain, receiving in exchange silks and spices from the Greek, gold dinars and brocaded stuffs from the Saracen. But the Franks

had few trading ships; and, although their pedlars risked life and liberty to barter with the Slavs in Bohemia and the Avars in Hungary, the work of distribution in Gaul itself was left to foreigners—Lombards, Greeks, and particularly Jews who had purchased special protection and immunities from the Crown. Not only was such trade despised; a number of causes hampered its free development—the insecurity of the roads, the exclusive privileges granted to particular markets, the oppressive weight of tolls and port-dues. These last were the more insupportable because rarely paid to the State. Riparian landlords suspended chains across the rivers and suffered no boat to pass without paying ransom. Fords and bridges were frequently private property; the attempt to find new and unrestricted routes was jealously resented by those who saw in the change a menace to their profits. Nor did the troubles of the merchant end here. The currency was debased; coiners pursued their nefarious trade with impunity; money could hardly be used as a medium of exchange. Even the law was an enemy to the profits of trade; in every period of scarcity heavy penalties were decreed against the forestaller who attempted to sell necessaries above their "natural" price.

It was not in the direction of commerce or the free association of equals that Frankish society tended. To live by the land and under a lord was the lot of most men. In the country outside the towns we find society grouping itself round the great proprietors. It is possible that the free village com-

munity was at one time a common phenomenon in the more Teutonic districts. But few or none of such communities were left at the time of which we write. There was a distinct class of yeomen freeholders; but it was rapidly diminishing. The oppression of powerful neighbours, the burden of military service, the poverty which resulted from imperfect skill in agriculture, all contributed to this result. From the Rhine to the Ocean, from the Pyrenees to the Channel, there had developed a network of large estates, or "vills," resembling in their organisation those *latifundia* which were the bane of the Roman Empire. The "vill" was farmed partly by the slaves of the owner, partly by serfs and free tenants. At the heart of it stood the "curtis," or mansion-house, forming with its barns and outhouses the four sides of a quadrangle. Here lived the owner or his bailiff; here were the barracks and the workshops of the household slaves. The architecture was of the rudest description, timber being the most usual material. The distinctive feature of the house was a portico supported by massive wooden balks and sometimes adorned with carvings or mural paintings. A banqueting hall occupied the greater part of the ground floor; above it was the "solar," or retiring-room, of the lord and his family. Respecting the economy of the "vill" we have much curious information. A noble had many such "vills," and placed in each of them a steward who sold part of the produce, sent the rest to the capital mansion-house, and presented an annual statement of accounts. Every kind of industry was pursued on the estate. Some of the

slaves were trained as smiths, carpenters, and masons; the women wove and span, not merely to clothe the household but also for the market. Cattle, horses, and sheep were bred with the utmost care. Orchards and herb-gardens, vine- and olive-yards were established at various points of the demesne. It fell to the steward's office to supervise all these sources of revenue. He collected the rents of the free tenants, sometimes in current coin, more often in produce; he exacted the labour-services which were due from the unfree. Freemen and serfs alike were subject to his supervision. He restrained them from deteriorating their farms; he protected them from violence; he intervened to arbitrate in their disputes. Over the slaves he exercised an authority which was little short of absolute. These wretched beings were in the eyes of the law mere chattels, holding property, if at all, only by sufferance. The bailiff, who was answerable to the law-courts for their offences, could inflict upon them any chastisement short of death.

The position of the slave was thus substantially the same as in Roman law. In two respects, however, his lot was ameliorated. The authority of the Church gave to his marriage a legal force, and protected his family life. Large sums were spent by the charitable in purchasing freedom for those whom they had learned to regard as brothers in Christ; rich men signalised their repentance for sin or their gratitude for good fortune by wholesale manumissions. Moreover, custom proved more gracious than law. The slave frequently received a farm and

ranked *de facto* on the same level with the serf, who, in the eyes of the law, was still a free man. It was no unusual thing for a slave to marry a free woman with the consent of his lord. In such a case the wife retained her freedom and transmitted it to the children of the marriage. The organisation of the "vill" thus proved not unfavourable to liberty in the lowest classes of society. Upon the yeomen farmers its effect was less beneficial. Over them the lord and his bailiff had no jurisdiction. But economic causes placed the tenant at their mercy. If evicted from his holding he had no possible means of subsistence, and the law-courts afforded at best a very precarious remedy. Even in the case where he had not received a loan of land, but had merely commended himself and his freehold to a lord's protection, it was difficult to break away from his self-imposed dependence. The law enforced the oath of the vassal with the greatest severity. Three excuses alone were allowed by Charles the Great as a sufficient reason for abjuration of fealty: that the lord has treated his vassal as a slave; that he has attacked his life or honour; that he has not afforded him proper protection. The obedience promised to the lord was strict and comprehensive. The vassal swore on bended knee "to do service and reverence as far as a freeman may, and not at any time of my life to withdraw myself from your power." The sons of the vassal could only inherit their father's land by the good will of the lord. "I shall not have the right to sell it, to give it away, nor to diminish the value," says one form of the oath; "at my death

it shall return into your hands without any dispute on the part of my heirs."

In many "vills," more especially those belonging to the Church, the power of the lord was augmented by a grant of immunities from the Crown. Such a grant ran as follows:

"Let no public official venture to make an entry for the purpose of hearing suits, levying fines, distraining on sureties. . . . Whatever profit the public treasury has hitherto received from free men, slaves, or any other class of people, shall go henceforth for ever to the altar-lights of the said church."

When the immunity was granted to a layman, the latter clause was varied to suit the circumstances. In both cases the result is the same. The favoured estate becomes a sanctuary into which the officers of justice may not penetrate. They must remain outside and summon the owner to produce the man whom they seek at the next meeting of the county court. If the court imposes a fine—and few indeed were the offences which could not be thus condoned—the landowner is left to collect it. He pays over to the court the "third penny," which is the judge's fee; the remainder, which under ordinary circumstances would have gone to the Crown, he keeps for himself. This he does, not merely when the accused is his own tenant, but even when a stranger has taken refuge on his land; though wilfully to harbour thieves is a high misdemeanour. This anomalous privilege originated on church lands, owing to the idea that the farms of the patron saint no less than

his minster-church were consecrated land. Extended by analogy to lay estates it became a serious obstacle to justice, and brought society one stage nearer to the epoch of private jurisdictions. In proportion as the central authority lost its immediate and pecuniary interest in the law-courts, it inclined to lease them to those who already took the profits.

For the present the benefit of immunities chiefly accrued to the Church. Already owning no inconsiderable fraction of the soil, she tended more and more to become a State within a State. The Frankish bishop ruled side by side with the count, and was hardly if at all his inferior. Important as a landholder, the bishop derived additional authority from his jurisdiction over the clergy, both secular and regular. Few of the monasteries had yet emancipated themselves from his control. On him the parish priests depended for their livelihood, since in most cases he received the tithe and apportioned it among them at his will. His law-court punished offences against morality and religion. His *advocatus*, or proctor, heard and settled suits between his tenants, and complaints of smaller import brought against them by third parties: the man of a bishop could not be sued in the public law-courts until justice had been refused by the episcopal assessor. He was in fact a public officer; his qualifications were fixed by the law; he was chosen with the consent of count and people.

Thus the Frankish Church became a social and political force of the first magnitude. It was in vain that Charles Martel and even his more scrupulous

successors sought to diminish her wealth. New donations soon repaired these ravages. Against the growing power of the State the hierarchy more than held its own. The struggle was not one of principle. The sense of corporate unity had almost disappeared. No bishop dreamed of taking orders from his metropolitan: no metropolitan cared to summon a synod. Prelates and abbots fought for their own land. What they were in private life we are told by St. Boniface. He calls them "publicans" and "whoremongers." He complains that they hunt and hawk, swear and gamble, like the worst of laymen. Nor were their inferiors much better. It was found necessary to inhibit priests from keeping more than one wife, from strolling the country, from frequenting taverns and places of worse repute. The inmates of cloisters called themselves seculars or regulars according to the convenience of the moment, and observed the rules of neither order. The churches were badly served, ritual corrupted by negligence and ignorance, the sacraments irregularly administered. The Church grew in power, but through the cupidity of individuals working for their own profit. She was a powerful and far-reaching organism, but her soul was tame and selfish.

Such, then, was the framework of Frankish society. Of the central government we say nothing. Before the age of Charles the Great it was a personal despotism, formless at first, and then encumbered by officials without powers and bureaux which served no purpose. The interest of Merovingian history lies in the development of provincial institutions

and communities. The most important result of the period is the formation of an aristocracy which is partly official and partly territorial. In the hands of that aristocracy lay the future of the Franks. The House of St. Arnulf sprang from its bosom, ruled by its favour, and found in it their ministers.

It is natural, therefore, to turn from the institutions to the men who made and used them, to ask what these nobles were and of what they were capable. Gregory of Tours supplies the answer. The type which he depicts bears little resemblance to the ideal Teuton of imaginative historians. His Franks are like children in their want of self-control and foresight, children also in their spitefulness and cunning. Swayed by the impulse of the moment they are capable by turns of supreme self-sacrifice and atrocious crimes. They have the pride of birth, yet they ape the manners of their Roman subjects; the pride of command, yet they show not the remotest conception of a ruler's responsibilities. Power and wealth appear to them the only objects worthy of pursuit, and both are frivolously squandered in the moment of attainment. Religion they value purely as an amulet against mischance; their Christianity is a new variety of paganism. The picture is a dark one. Perhaps it is over-coloured, for the character of a nation can hardly be inferred from the gossip of a "*chronique scandaleuse*." Moreover Gregory of Tours shows us the Frank as corrupted by contact with the vices of an older civilisation. In the East these vices were less fashionable; and it was from the East that the future rulers of Frankland came. In

many details of daily life the Austrasian noble copied the Gallo-Roman. He imported his clothes from Italy or Constantinople, and cut his hair after the Roman fashion. Antique statues and mosaics adorned his mansion-house. At his banquets the gleemen sang no longer the old Frankish sagas, but Latin odes in the style of Prudentius or Fortunatus. Often he gloried in tracing his descent from a consul or a senator. But in essentials he was still a German, prizing valour and loyalty above wisdom and all the intellectual virtues. His conception of social order came from laws framed long ago by the wise men of the nation when it lived beyond the Rhine.

Let us glance for a moment at the elements of national strength which lie revealed in this customary law. We are struck in the first place by the sanctity with which the family relations are invested. The Neustrian Frank, especially when of royal rank, was frequently polygamous. The good King Dagobert emulated Solomon in the number of his wives and concubines: irregular unions unsanctioned by the Church were at all times lightly contracted and lightly broken. But these were a departure from the best traditions of the race. In the Salic law the wife divides with the husband the control of the household. She is richly dowered by him, and therefore independent of his caprices. The "wergild" of a woman who has borne children is equal to that of a king's vassal. Other documents tell the same tale. One book of formulæ preserves the draft of a love-letter from a young man to his betrothed: "When I lie down to rest you are always in my thoughts, and

when I sleep I dream of you. May health be yours in the daytime and may your nights pass well. Think always of your lover as I do of you. May the God who reigns in heaven and watches over the world bring you to my arms before I die." The deeds which register a marriage or betrothal are full of affectionate phrases. "By God's grace," says one formula, "my wife and I will live together inseparably while life continues in us." The closeness of the tie between parents and children is proved in a different way, by the law of inheritance. The land which a man inherited from his ancestors was not his own in the same sense as chattels and land acquired by purchase. His sons had a distinct interest in it; without their consent he could not alienate; at his death it was divided equally among them. Parental authority was left to be protected by mutual interest and affection: the children were never, as at Rome, subjected by the law to the absolute dominion of their father. Custom gave him only the rights of a guardian, which he exercised in case of daughters until marriage; in that of sons till their fifteenth year, at which age they were invested with the warrior's lance and shield and admitted to the host. Daughters were at first excluded from a share in the paternal inheritance; but the sentiment of later times so far modified this "ancient and impious rule" that the father might by a written deed place his daughter on a footing of equality with her brothers.

Respect for the national peace is the second trait which we remark. Although money atoned for most

offences from murder downwards, those of a public were carefully distinguished from those of a merely private character. The offender against "the peace" must pay a fine to the King besides compensation to the injured party. Certain crimes which nearly touched the royal dignity or interests incurred the "King's ban"; the criminal was put outside the pale of the law until he had paid the immense fine of sixty gold *solidi*. An injury to widows, orphans, or churchmen was visited with the same penalty as an attack upon a special client of the King.

Of the primitive freedom to which Frankish law and custom bear witness it is hardly necessary to speak. Whatever the facts of government had become, tradition still demanded that in the law-court, camp, and council-chamber, the King and his officials must defer to the voice of the assembled chiefs. The separation of social classes—a fact which underlies the whole system of Frankish law—possessed among many drawbacks this great advantage, that it intensified the independence and the fellow feeling of the aristocracy. The institution of vassalage, as between the King and his nobles, rather strengthened than diminished the prejudice in favour of liberty. Vassalage was a contract formed with the free consent of the weaker party; it subsisted only while the stronger fulfilled his share of the bargain. Above all there was the precious rule that no magnate could be condemned to death or forfeiture but by the sentence of his peers.

Men possessing these traditions were not quite unfit to rule. But without the impulse of some

great idea they would remain inert; if they established a new social order it might be solid, it could not be glorious.

A few years before the accession of Charles, the idea which had been wanting came their way. Late in the seventh and early in the eighth century, missionaries from England took up the work of conversion at the point where the disciples of St. Gall and St. Colomban had laid it down. Willibrod in Frisia, Boniface in Thuringia, Alemannia, and Bavaria, baptised, built monasteries, and founded bishops' sees with the sanction and encouragement of the Holy See. Reviving the militant spirit of the Church, and restoring the primitive severity of discipline, they won to their cause the enthusiastic support of the Eastern Franks. Policy no doubt influenced Charles Martel when he took the missionaries under his protection, and Pepin when he called them in to reform the Church of Gaul. It needed little calculation to perceive that the eastward march of Christianity must favour the expansion of the Frankish nation, and that the best check upon the national Church was to be found in an alliance with the Holy See and its emissaries. But conviction did even more than calculation. Reverence for Rome and zeal for the advancement of her power grew upon the minds of men. The cloisters founded in Germany by Boniface were filled with men of noble birth. Not once or twice alone do we hear of famous warriors throwing up their worldly career and going out into the wilderness to make it the garden of the Lord. Those who were incapable of

such a sacrifice were still ready to serve in their degree. The cause appealed to their immemorial love of war and conquest. They burned to march forth against the heathen, to avenge the blood of the martyrs, to batter down the shrines of idols.

The new school of ecclesiastics were not thinkers or students. The one gift which they all possessed was the power of organising religious fervour for a very concrete purpose. When Charles came to the throne they had already been engaged upon this work for more than seventy years. They had completed the reduction of the Rhineland, they had ascended to the sources of the Main, they had pressed along the Danube to the confluence of the Enns. Already they menaced Saxony from the sources of the Weser. Upon Gaul, too, they had impressed the spirit of the new revival, convening church councils, appointing new metropolitans, chastising an immoral clergy. In their influence and that of the Apostle's Vicar, whom they served so loyally, we have the motive force which was to raise the Frankish aristocracy above the interests of the moment, and to nerve the arm of their greatest leader.

COSTUMES OF FRANKISH LADIES OF THE NOBILITY IN THE IXTH CENTURY.

FROM A MINIATURE IN THE BIBLE OF CHARLES THE BALD, IN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY, PARIS.

CHAPTER III

CHARLES AND CARLOMAN

768–771 A.D.

THE reign of Pepin the Short forms the prelude to that of his son. The keynote to both is found in the dual alliance with the national Church in Frankland, with the Church universal as represented by the Roman See. In the years 742–745, while Pepin is ruling as Mayor jointly with his brother Carloman, we find them engaged in courting the friendship of St. Boniface, in promoting his mission enterprises, in using his zeal and influence to discipline and reorganise the Frankish clergy. When Carloman, either induced by motives of piety or coerced by the intrigues of his brother (the annals give the first explanation; the facts which they advance suggest the second), retired to Italy and the cloisters of Monte Casino, we find that the interests of the Church have still the first place in the plans of Pepin. It was not long before he received a rich reward. In 750 Pope Zacharias quieted his well-feigned scruples, and authorised him to take the royal title from the last of the Merovingians. In 754 Pepin and his sons (Charles and Carloman) were anointed "to be a royal

priesthood" by Stephen II. The next move of the new King was more than sanctioned, it was directly inspired, by the Papacy. Stephen, not improbably with the consent of the Emperor Constantine Copronymus, invited Pepin into Italy, used him to recover the Imperial Exarchate of Ravenna from the Lombard Aistulf, and gave him the title of Patrician. As Patrician the King became in name an official of the Empire; it may be that Constantine expected to find in him a humble servant who would be content to fill the place occupied of old by the Exarchs. Such, however, was not the purpose of the Pope. Stephen saw in the Patrician only a patron of the Roman See who should protect her at once from the violence of the Lombard and the sovereign claims of the Empire. Nor was the Frank slow to adopt this view of his position. New usurpations on the part of Aistulf led to a second invasion of his kingdom. Once more the Exarchate was recovered; but now the conqueror, ignoring all Imperial rights, bestowed the cities as a gift upon the Papacy. Protests from Constantinople were unheeded. Though the papal chancery continued to date its charters by the years of the regnant Emperor, the Western Patriarchate had in reality withdrawn from his allegiance. Though Pepin, cautious as ever, avoided an open breach with Constantine, he had none the less struck at the slender chain which united East and West in one *Respublica Romana*. He had commenced the schism which his son should consummate. And to him as to Charles the way of doing so was suggested by the Papacy. It remains to notice the struggle of eight

years' duration with which the career of Pepin closes. For upon this also he embarked at the bidding of the Church.

The duchy of Aquitaine, after Charles Martel had saved it from the Saracen, continued as of old to be the most troublesome of Frankish dependencies. Over Duke Hunald the brothers Carloman and Pepin had won an easy victory in 742. The latter, as Mayor of the western provinces, made Aquitaine his peculiar concern. He confiscated much land beyond the Loire and, under the impulse of the new religious movement, used it to endow monasteries and churches. For many years the Aquitanians acquiesced in their humiliation. Hunald retired to a monastery and was succeeded by his son Waifer. At first the latter showed his animosity merely by the protection which he lent to Grifo, the mutinous half-brother of Pepin (748–753). Then in 760 he laid violent hands upon the possessions of the Frankish churches. Pepin hastened to the defence of his clergy and a sanguinary war began. Year after year the Franks marched across the Loire to sack the strongholds in which the enemy took refuge; and in every campaign one or two fell before them. But Duke Tassilo of Bavaria seized the opportunity to shake off his allegiance; and, fearful of an attack upon the eastern provinces, Pepin suspended his Aquitanian operations for two whole years (764–765). Thus it was only at the close of his life, and when already the prey of a fatal malady, that he slew Waifer, penetrated to Saintes, the capital of Aquitaine, and there in a great assembly committed the

conquered country to the rule of Frankish counts and *missi* who were intended to destroy the last traces of provincial independence (768).

The conquests were held by a precarious tenure. It was necessary to leave garrisons in Angoulême and other strongholds. Many years must elapse before the ravages of Waifer and of his adversaries could be repaired. The dying King realised that it was not reserved for him to watch the restoration of prosperity. His one desire was that he might live long enough to reach Neustria, the centre of his kingdom and the time-honoured seat of royalty. By slow and painful stages he travelled back to his favourite monastery of St. Denis. There in the presence and with the consent of his magnates he divided the kingdom between his sons Charles and Carloman. Not long afterwards he died and was buried "with great worship" in the minster-church. A rude effigy, dating from the thirteenth century, still stands on the south side of Abbot Suger's chancel to commemorate the supposed place of his interment. History has done him scant justice; the story of his life must be pieced together from a few legends and a barren list of dates; in mind as in body he appears a dwarf by comparison with his gigantic son. Yet, the more closely we examine his career, the more clearly we may perceive the germs of that policy upon which the renown of Charles the Great depends. The son at all events neither forgot his obligations to his father, nor disdained to remind his subjects that the Western Empire rested upon foundations which had been laid by Pepin. In ideas

Pepin was never wanting; what he lacked was the fiery spirit and magnetic personality which gained for Charles the enthusiastic devotion of his own countrymen and even of conquered peoples. The Franks, we are told, followed Pepin across the snow-clad Alps, but did so with doubts and murmurings. The anecdote illustrates very plainly his strength and weakness. Experience showed the wisdom of his plans and extorted the confidence of his warriors; but to the end they were chilled by contact with the astute schemer whose untutored intellect could penetrate and thwart the boasted statecraft of the Greek. He was a great ruler but not the ruler of their dreams.

His two sons were acclaimed immediately after the funeral ceremonies, and departed each to his own kingdom. The scheme of partition under which they inherited is not without its bearing on the later course of events and must therefore be noticed in detail. Charles took Austrasia and the greater part of Neustria, with the lands lying between the Loire and the Garonne. Burgundy, Provence, Alsace, Alemannia, and the south-eastern part of Aquitaine fell to Carloman. The boundary line between the two kingdoms began at Ingolstadt on the Bavarian frontier, thence skirted the course of the river Main to Worms; afterwards, running almost due west, it passed between Soissons and Noyon and touched the Loire at the point where that river bends southward. The result was that the kingdom of the younger was half surrounded by that of the elder brother. It was an arrangement cumbrous to the

last degree, but it gave to each brother a share in which Roman were united to Teutonic lands. A coincidence of national with dynastic frontiers could hardly have failed to produce a lasting schism in the Frankish realm. Moreover it had the effect of giving to both an interest in the wars against Tassilo, and the pacification of Aquitaine. In short, everything that statecraft could do was done to mitigate the inevitable evils of partition. It speaks volumes for the family sentiment of the Franks that Pepin, with so clear a perception of the dangers to be feared, still dared not disinherit his younger son.

Unfortunately the disparity of temper between the two brothers was such that a conflict could not be averted. They were the children of one mother, Bertrada, the Bertha Flatfoot of later romance. Carloman had now reached his sixteenth and Charles his twenty-sixth year. The former was a boy in years and abilities, peevish, consequential, and a willing prey to the flatterers who told him that, as one born in the purple, he had a claim to the whole and not a poor half of the kingdom. On the other hand, the future Emperor, confident of his title, conscious of the reputation which he had won in his father's wars, and anxious for a free hand to carry on that father's plans, was little inclined to forgive these pretensions in his junior. We need not go deeper for the causes of their mutual ill will. Some writers have supposed that Charles was born before the Church had sanctioned the marriage of his parents, and that Carloman in consequence claimed to take

the whole inheritance. Charles was born in 743; one authority gives the date of the marriage as 750.* It agrees with this supposition that Eginhard should profess to know nothing whatever respecting the birth and boyhood of his hero. And it may be that popular legend in attaching to the name of Charlemagne all the romantic legends of ill-used love-children has worked upon this slender basis of fact. The romance of Charles Mainet is full of unhistorical absurdities; yet one suspects there was a reason why the mighty Emperor should be chosen for the central figure. On the other hand, we find a difficulty in believing that a bastard could be admitted to an equal share with the lawful heir. This was never the custom in the House of Arnulf. Neither Charles Martel nor Charles the Great himself attempted to leave their bastard sons any share in the royal inheritance. And so we must leave the puzzle as it stands.

From the first there could be no doubt that Charles was destined to eclipse his brother. Through the romances of a later age we catch faint echoes of the ballads in which contemporaries sang his praises. He was so hardy, they tell us, that he would hunt the wild bull single-handed, so strong that he felled a horse and rider with one blow of his fist. He could straighten four horseshoes joined together, and lift

* *Annales Francorum* in Codex Bertinianus: quoted by Kurze. It is in this year that the annals first mention Charles and Carloman. Possibly the scribe thought it necessary, for that reason, to insert a mention of their mother. He says "Pippinus conjugem duxit Bertradam," without expressly stating that the marriage took place in this year.

with his right hand a fully equipped fighting-man to the level of his head. His forehead was majestic, his nose like an eagle's beak. He had the eyes of a lion: when he was angry they gleamed so that no man could look him in the face. He dressed like a Frank of the ancient days, scoffed at foreign fashions, loved the speech and the songs of his own Austrasia. Add to these external traits a tireless energy, an iron will, a keen love of order and of justice, deep-seated religious instincts, and under all an exuberant animal nature: such was the man as he appeared to his contemporaries. Hard he might be called by some; but those who knew him best loved him the most. When it became necessary to choose between the brothers, it was with Charles that their mother threw in her lot. Perhaps no verdict can be more emphatic than that of the Saxons who had every cause to hate him: "The best man on earth and the bravest was Charles: Truth and good faith he established and kept." *

The occasion for the outbreak of ill feeling was supplied by a third revolt of Aquitaine (769). Hunald, the father of Waifer, was still alive. Burning to avenge the death of his son, he left the Isle of Rhé, where he had lived as a monk for the last twenty years, and called the vassals of his house to arms. Saintonge and Poitou formed the theatre of the revolt; and accordingly Carloman, whose territories were unaffected, flatly refused to lend his brother aid. No justification could be offered for this selfish policy; the traditional law of the Franks demanded that coheirs should lay aside their differences in the

* Quoted by Zeller, *Histoire d' Allemagne*, ii., 32.

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face of the national enemy. After a futile conference in Poitou the two brothers parted in anger and, so far as we know, never met again.

The revolt, it is true, proved less serious than had been expected. With the help of the garrison of Angoulême and such forces as could be collected on the spur of the moment, Charles routed the friends of the old duke and chased him to the south. Hunald took refuge with Loup, the still independent Duke of the Gascons and his own brother's son. It was a desperate venture, for in time past he had cruelly used the father of Loup, and this was still remembered against him in Gascony. The nephew immediately sent to Charles offering his homage and the surrender of his uncle; and Charles returned in triumph to Austrasia, though he delayed his departure to build a stronghold at Fronsac, the chief ford of the Dordogne. He had learned from Pepin the value of such posts as a check upon doubtful feudatories. Throughout his wars he showed the true general's eye for the strategic keys of a conquered country. His military abilities have been greatly exaggerated: in the matter of tactics Henry the Fowler displayed a far more inventive and resourceful genius. But in his precautionary measures Charles will stand a comparison with any mediæval sovereign.

Hunald, more fortunate than the leaders of subsequent rebellions, escaped the sentence reserved by Frankish law for treason. He was merely sent to Rome that he might answer before the Pope for the breach of his religious vows. On expressing repent-

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ance he was relegated to a Roman monastery. A little later he again forswore the cowl and fled to the Court of Pavia. The Lombards were not then inclined to break with Charles for the sake of a helpless old man, and Hunald was stoned to death,—"which he had richly deserved," remarks the unsympathetic narrator. Thus Charles was delivered from his enemy and Aquitaine remained at peace. But the betrayal of national and family interests by Carloman was not forgotten.

For the next few years Charles spared no effort to isolate his brother. The existence of a second palace seriously diminished the stock of ability available for his service. Accordingly we learn that he did his utmost to discover and to promote men of promise. A chronicler remarks with amazement that even the serfs of the royal demesne were sometimes singled out to be his counts. But he did not rely entirely upon novices. By various arts he attached to his service many of his father's old advisers—in particular the aged Abbot Sturm of Fulda, who had been the most trusted friend of St. Boniface, and was now, since the death of that prelate (755), the acknowledged head of the missionary movement within the German Church. Into this movement Charles from policy or conviction threw himself, heart and soul. He could not yet afford to support the leaders in their more distant enterprises; therefore he confined himself to furthering their other project of internal reform. With the sanction of the Pope and the advice of the magnates he issued about this time the first capitulary

of the reign. Except for one article reforming the local law-courts this document deals entirely with moral discipline, the duties and obligations of the clergy, the diocesan authority of the bishops. Its preface states that it is drawn up by Charles at the exhortation of the Pope and in virtue of his own Patrician authority.* Of the remaining articles the more part are copied from previous lawgivers, in particular from the edicts which Carloman, the uncle of Charles, had made with the advice of Boniface. Those which are original afford more evidence of praiseworthy intentions than of serious reflection. But they are remarkable as showing how from the first the exigencies of his position compelled Charles to seek the friendship both of Rome and of the national Church.

The Church, however, was not the only power which he courted. He had conceived the idea of a diplomatic combination against Carloman. Tassilo of Bavaria was still an avowed rebel; but his marriage with a Lombard princess made him so important that his fault might conveniently be ignored. Charles therefore stooped to conclude a formal treaty with the sometime vassal of his father; and through this new friend made overtures to Didier the king of the Lombards.

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* "Karolus . . . . devotus sanctæ ecclesiæ defensor atque adjutor in omnibus." It is however to be noted that in diplomata Pepin and Carloman the younger make no use of the Patrician title: and Charles himself only begins to do so after his first visit to Rome. Till then he follows his brother and his father in describing himself as "Rex Francorum, vir illustər."

With such powerful allies he might well seem to have his junior completely at his mercy. But their friendship hardly went beyond fair words. An united Frankland was not desirable to Lombard or Bavarian. Charles was not long in making this discovery; and the consequence was a change of policy. He allowed Queen Bertha to undertake the office of mediation. The good woman travelled into Alsace where Carloman was then residing, reasoned with him, and persuaded him to go through the form of a reconciliation. A renewal of brotherly affection could not be expected on either side, but the treaty was a warning to alien powers that the kings of the Franks would not suffer themselves to be played off against each other.

Then followed an intricate episode on which our sources throw so little light that to trace the actions of the several parties is difficult,—to estimate their motives almost impossible. With the reconciliation disappeared all immediate reason for a league between Charles and Didier. But it seems that the former refused to stake everything on the good faith of his brother. From Alsace Queen Bertha travelled into Italy, and on reaching the Court of Pavia announced that she had come with powers to offer a double marriage alliance. Charles was willing to wed a Lombard princess; his sister Gisla would accept the hand of Adalghis, Didier's only son. There was a third power whose interests must be consulted. Didier was at that moment in wrongful possession of wide estates belonging to the Roman See: and of that See his prospective son-in-law was the hereditary

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Patrician. Let him, as the price of a connection so advantageous, resign his ill-gotten gains to the Apostle from whom they had been filched.

The Lombards were a declining power, conscious of their inferiority to the Franks. Didier clutched at the offer and cheerfully made the sacrifice required. It may be that he expected to quiet the scruples of Charles and at some future time to reap a tenfold harvest of plunder. For the present, however, nothing appeared to cast a suspicion on his good faith. On leaving Pavia the Queen-Mother visited Rome and in all innocence informed the Pope of her diplomatic triumph.

Stephen was far from sharing her satisfaction. In the union of his friends with his enemies he saw nothing but danger to himself. Pavia was the Carthage of Christian Rome, to be destroyed at any cost. Deliberately the Pope set himself to break the new alliance. It was a momentous resolution, involving as its sequel the overthrow of a famous nation, the permanent disruption of Italy, and the foundation of the Western Empire. The object, too, was great: nothing less, in fact, than to give the Holy See a firm footing on Italian soil and a first instalment of that royal state with which in the Middle Ages it dazzled the eyes and led captive the hearts of Christian men.

Even before Bertha's arrival rumours of the new alliance had reached the Pope. They left him in doubt whether the hand of Desiderata was asked for Charles or for Carloman, but he lost no time in issuing his protest. It took the form of a letter addressed

to the two brothers jointly, and it stated a case which, even apart from the question of Papal interests, was a strong one. Carloman was already married with all the forms of law to a Frankish lady; and even Charles had contracted with a certain Himiltrude a left-handed union, which, though of no validity either in the Frankish or in the canon law, could hardly be ignored *in foro conscientiæ*. Morality was on the side of Stephen. It is therefore to be regretted that, after lightly touching on moral considerations, he turned to other arguments quite unworthy of his cause and high position. "Have the brothers no regard for the custom which forbids a Frankish king to marry a strange woman? Do they not know that all the children of Lombards are lepers, that the race is an outcast from the family of nations? St. Peter's anathema upon the impious union and all who may be consenting to it! For these there is neither part nor lot in the heavenly kingdom. May they broil with the devil and his angels in everlasting fire!"

For the moment these thunderbolts seemed to have missed their mark. The pious Gisla, indeed, refused to fulfil her contract with Adalghis and turned her thoughts to the cloister; but Queen Bertha, less scrupulous than her daughter, took the Princess Desiderata in her train to Frankland, and Charles celebrated his marriage without more ado. Stephen made no public protest. Indeed a conspiracy of the Roman clergy, fomented by Carloman, and having for its end his deposition, drove him to make use of Didier's intervention. The Lombard king marched

to Rome with his army, put to death the emissaries of Carloman, and handed over the other ringleaders to Stephen, in whose dungeons their existence was soon terminated. In return for these services he received a quittance from the outstanding claims of the Holy See; and the Pope wrote letters to Charles expressing complete confidence in his new-found ally. But meanwhile beyond the Alps his curses had borne their fruit. Desiderata was sickly and bore no children. The somewhat fickle affections of Charles transferred themselves to a new face. He took the course recommended both by inclination and by religion: that is to say, he divorced his Lombard wife, and married Hildegarde the Swabian, a mere child but of surpassing beauty. The incident is one over which his historians tread cautiously. Only we know that Bertha, a matron of the old school and a stranger to casuistry, took up the cause of the hapless stranger, quarrelling for the first and last time with her darling son. She did not stand alone in her opinion; others of Charles' kinsmen reproached him to his face with faithlessness.

While Didier was still smarting from this insult, Stephen seized the opportunity to break off a friendship of which he no longer stood in need. His legates appeared at Pavia with an impudent demand for the settlement of those claims which he had so recently renounced. The Lombard king boiled over with indignation. "Let it suffice your master that I have saved him from King Carloman, and have destroyed the men who enslaved him in his own city." Such was the only reply which he vouchsafed. But the

sequel shows that the incident made him desperate. He was now convinced that a conspiracy existed between the Pope and Charles for his destruction. He only waited for an opportunity to deliver a counter-blow.

Conspiracy there was none, if we have rightly interpreted the events. Charles bore Didier no ill will. He had found the Lombard marriage inconvenient; having divorced Didier's daughter he was prepared to resume friendly relations if Didier would pocket the affront. On the other hand, the implacable hostility of the Holy See, using Charles as its tool, placed Didier in a position of no less danger than if such a conspiracy had actually existed.

For the feud between the Pope and Lombard there was more than one reason. It originated in the Arianism of the latter. Until the beginning of the eighth century they made light of the Papal authority, and more than once threatened it with open violence. When this quarrel was healed by the sagacious Liutprand (who formally acknowledged the spiritual supremacy of the Holy See), there still remained an acrimonious dispute respecting those papal estates in various provinces which the Lombards had appropriated at their first coming into Italy. They vainly appealed to prescription to defend their title; for the Holy See would not allow that the rights of St. Peter could be destroyed by the lapse of time. And in the middle of the century the derelict Exarchate became the subject of a similar dispute. Though much contracted, this province was still sufficiently extensive to form an

effectual barrier between the northern and southern dominions of the Lombards. Hence its conquest had always been the prime object of every Lombard king who aspired to consolidate his power. In 753, Aistulf appeared to have obtained complete success; every city of Romagna, even Ravenna itself, had fallen before his arms. Then Pepin, at the invitation of the Pope, swooped down upon him, took away the spoils, and presented them to the Holy See. At the present moment the possessions of the Pope reached across the Apennines from sea to sea*; the unification of the Lombard kingdom was more remote than ever. It is easy to conceive with what resentment the Lombard Court regarded the defenceless power which thwarted their schemes; and with what trembling the Pope enjoyed his triumph. The wonder is that the Lombards displayed so much rather than so little respect for the rights of their enemy. Even at this time Didier's ambition seems merely to have contemplated the acquisition of Ferrara, Faenza, and sufficient territory south of those

* Before the fall of the Exarchate, the Holy See had made good a prescriptive title to the *Ducatus Romanus*, which included the coast-line from the mouth of the Garigliano to a point some miles north of Civita Vecchia, and extended inland to the borders of Sabina and the Abruzzi: also to the *Ducatus Perusinus*, the district centring round Perugia and Todi. By the Donation of Pepin it received the following towns: Ravenna, Cesena, Rimini, Montefeltro, Urbino, Pesaro, Fano, Sinigaglia, Jesi, Gubbio. Didier, on his accession, purchased the favour of the Pope by surrendering the Duchy of Ferrara, and Faenza. He also promised, but failed, to hand over Bologna, Tivoli, Osimo, Ancona, and Humana. This faithlessness was the occasion of his breach with the Papacy. All these lands had originally belonged to the Exarchate.

cities to secure his communications with Spoletum. Nor was this moderation entirely due to fear of the Franks. The Lombards of the eighth century differed widely from the savages whose shaven crowns and white hose provoked amazement when they rode behind Alboin into the valley of the Po. They still, it is true, lived by the exploitation of their Italian serfs; still preferred the rude laws of Rotharis to the mature wisdom of Roman jurisprudence; still gloried in the flowing beard and hair which distinguished them from the despised provincial. But, dwelling in a land of cities, they shook off their passion for a rural life; under their rule the churches of Milan, the hundred towers of Verona, the royal palace and the frowning fortifications of Pavia recalled the splendour of the Roman Empire. Their ecclesiastics were the most learned in Italy. Bobbio and Monte Casino became noted seminaries when the monks of Rome had forgotten the first principles of accidence. Professors of grammar and theology lectured to attentive audiences not merely in the capital, but even in the courts of the southern duchies. It was at Pavia that the youthful Alcuin, roaming in search of new books and new teachers, heard a Christian doctor refute a Jewish rabbi. The reader for whom Paul the Deacon revised Eutropius and wrote his history of the Lombard race was a daughter of King Didier. Of her husband, Duke Areghis of Beneventum, an epitaph records that he had learned everything which the sciences of Logic, Physics, and Ethics could teach. No doubt the veneer was a thin one. Barbarism and culture, the

fierce instincts of the savage and the ascetic piety of the monk, were strangely blended in Lombard society. We see the strife of conflicting elements most plainly in the work of Paul, who in his scholarly retirement rendered into classical Latin the wild sagas of his nation, the loves and hates of Rosamund and Theudelinda. Yet the Lombards in their rough way revered Rome and revered the head of the Church. This history shows how more than once they stayed their hand at the moment when they might with ease have absorbed the Duchy and annihilated the Holy See. Their forbearance was ill requited. The Popes refused to be appeased, kept alive old grievances, and lived in lynx-like expectation of others to come. In short the geographical position of the two powers, rather than any peculiar malignity on either side, made them irreconcilable foes.

In the following chapter we shall see how Charles was drawn into the feud and terminated it by the extinction of the Lombard kingdom.

CHAPTER IV

THE FALL OF PAVIA

773–774 A.D.

DIDIER'S opportunity was not long in coming. On December 4, 771, Carloman died suddenly at his winter residence of Samouci near Laon. Although since the reconciliation he had preserved an outward friendship with his brother, his intrigues had been a cause of serious annoyance, and the news of his death produced a very general feeling of relief which there was no attempt to disguise. A pious monk, in sending to Charles a reminder of the blessings which Heaven had vouchsafed him, does not scruple to remark: "The third is, that God has preserved you from the wiles of your brother . . . the fifth and not the least, that God has removed your brother from this earthly kingdom."* The vassals of Carloman were no sooner assured of his death than they hurried off to meet Charles and to offer him their homage. By his wife Gerberga Carloman had two infant sons. But the Frankish law of inheritance recognised the claim of a brother as equal or perhaps superior to that of the children.

* Letter of Cathwulph to Charles, Bouquet, *Recueil*, v., p. 634.

The rule which Charles himself prescribed many years later in his testament was this: that if the subjects of either coheir wished his portion to be inherited by his descendants they should be allowed to have their way; otherwise it should accrue to the surviving brothers. Probably Pepin had given his sanction to the same principle. In any case, it is clear that only an inconsiderable minority of Carloman's subjects favoured the claim of his sons. The weight of opinion was on the side of Charles.

Frankish kings were not remarkable for their tenderness to defeated rivals. Gerberga assumed as a matter of course that the safety of her sons must be secured by flight. In the depth of winter she arose and hurried across the Alps to Pavia, accompanied only by a few faithful servants.* There she found a ready welcome. The relations of Didier with her husband had not been of the most friendly kind. But the union of the two kingdoms in the hand of Charles would give an overpowering advantage to the coalition by which the Lombard conceived himself to be threatened. He promised accordingly to vindicate the claims of the children against their uncle.

Eginhard is at pains to inform us that the fears of Gerberga were groundless. Charles was annoyed at her flight, but merely because it cast an imputation on his honour. He made no attempt to pursue her, and indeed appears to have remained for some

* Chief among these was Autchaire or Otger, a Frankish duke, celebrated in the Charlemagne cycle under the title "Ogier de Danemarche."

months either ignorant or careless of what was passing on the other side of the Alps. The first use which he made of his newly acquired power was to forward the ideas of the missionaries in Germany. In July, 772, he convoked the assembly of the national host at Worms and started on his first campaign against the Saxon confederacy. He found his excuse in the fact that the Saxons, not to mention earlier defections, had refused to pay the tribute of 300 horses with which they purchased the withdrawal of his father from their land. It does not appear that for the moment he had in view anything more serious than a military parade, which should teach the Saxons to respect the persons of missionaries and to refrain from border forays. The expedition was hardly more than an experiment, and as such we may leave it to be discussed in dealing with the later Saxon wars.

Charles returned triumphant in October to find that in his absence the plans of Didier had been vigorously prosecuted. Even before his expedition they had made some little progress. The weak and fickle Pope Stephen died in January, 772. He was succeeded by Hadrian, a noble Roman, of limited ideas but far greater honesty than his predecessor. The nominee of that party which Stephen had overthrown with Didier's assistance, Hadrian clung to the policy which until the time of his immediate predecessor had uniformly guided the Papacy in its dealings with the Lombard, and turned a deaf ear to the solicitations of King Didier, who would gladly have created a breach between Charles and

the new Pope. Meeting with a cold rejection of his overtures, the King resolved on a bolder policy. Seizing the cities of Ferrara, Comacchio, Faenza, he proceeded to menace Ravenna, and on receiving a protest from Hadrian demanded that the latter should redeem his possessions by crowning the sons of Carloman. The offer was refused, not without protests from the Lombard party in the Curia. Disgusted with his master's firmness, the leader of this party, Afiarta, the Papal chamberlain, opened a secret correspondence with Pavia. Hadrian discovered the treachery in time and arrested Afiarta, who with or without the Pope's command was quickly put to death. Didier took up the challenge. He marched on Rome with all his army and the Frankish princes. His purpose was to demand their coronation at the sword's point. But the city was hastily garrisoned with the militia of the Duchy; the fortifications were repaired, the gates walled up; the undaunted Pope threatened to excommunicate any Lombard who should cross his frontiers. Didier and his men were not proof against the menace. They halted, wavered, and finally drew back. They had lost their last opportunity of securing the Papacy for a partisan, and of raising rivals against Charles.

Meanwhile Hadrian sent a legate to Frankland with an urgent request for help. The Alpine passes were held by the Lombards, and the priest was compelled to go by sea to Marseilles. After a toilsome journey he found Charles resting in winter quarters at Thionville, a royal villa in Lorraine. He

presented his credentials and reminded the King of the oath which he had taken as a Patrician to defend the See of Peter. But close upon his heels came the ambassadors of Didier armed with a circumstantial refutation of the charges against their master.

Charles appears to have been perplexed rather than alarmed. Nothing short of coronation by the Pope could make his nephews dangerous; there was no reason to fear that Hadrian's fidelity would falter after emerging triumphant from so severe a test. An expedition to Italy was too serious a matter to be undertaken except as a last resort. As regarded the seizure of Papal territories he could make excuses for the Lombard. The rights which Pepin's Donations had guaranteed were of dubious extent, for the boundaries of the Exarchate had varied greatly at different times. It was possible that Didier had, after all, the better right to Ferrara and Faenza; the Pope would certainly have been puzzled if required to produce his title-deeds. At all events some reparation was owing to Didier for the insult put upon his daughter. For these reasons Charles took a middle course, sending commissioners to make inquiries on the spot, and to obtain for the Papacy satisfaction of its equitable demands. The commissioners not unnaturally decided in favour of Hadrian. Didier then resorted to the excuse that he held the towns as security for a considerable loan advanced by him to the Papacy. Charles offered to discharge the loan in full, but Didier refused to take the money.

The time had come for the Patrician to use the

last remedy of war. In a preliminary council of the Franks Charles explained the wrongs of the Pope and announced his intention of going in person to redress them. They approved the design; the summons was sent round for an Italian expedition and Geneva was fixed as the rendezvous of the host.

Few sights can have been more imposing than this "Mayfield." Every landholder was expected to appear under the banner of his count; and the King's vassals brought with them all their free retainers. Poor men came on foot armed solely with lance, bow, and shield; there were also those who, unable to afford even this humble equipment, made shift to furnish themselves with knotted clubs, scythes, and flails. The rich were mounted and wore long shirts of mail; in addition to the weapons of the foot-soldier they carried a sword and dagger; their heads were defended by iron skull-caps. This heavy cavalry formed the *corps d'élite* ("*scarae*") upon whose impetuous charge the Frankish general relied for victory. The infantry were held in reserve to finish off the enemy when his ranks were broken. The baggage train was a remarkable feature of the host. Each local contingent brought with it a number of waggons covered with leather aprons; they contained food for three months, arms and clothing for half a year, and such tools as might be needed for siege-works or encampments.

This annual military service was the chief of the dues which the Frank and his subjects rendered to their King. Where other men gave money they

gave their labour and their lives. Those who shrank from war might purchase exemption by payment of the "heriban"; but this was a considerable sum (60 solidi = £45 by weight). Most men preferred to fight; while the Empire was still in the making, few but the women and children, the aged, the sick, and the unfree, were left at home. The very sight of the Frankish host, in all its multitudes, sufficed to appal an enemy; and the host grew rather than diminished in the incessant wars of Charles, for each new conquest added its quota of warriors to future expeditions. It was a system for which an economist can find no justification. The poverty of the Franks, the frequent famines from which they suffered, the backward condition of the arts in their dominions, may in great measure be attributed to the continued absence of the best men in the field. Yet, on the other hand, no more potent means could have been devised of maintaining the personal ascendancy of the King or of strengthening the national sentiment. Here as elsewhere Charles accepted the institutions which he found already in existence, and contented himself with using them to the best advantage.

Two roads were open to an army descending on Lombardy from the north-west, that by the Mont Cenis and that by the Great St. Bernard. To accelerate the march, Charles resolved that both should be used. One-half of the host, commanded by his uncle, Duke Bernhard, received orders to take the more northerly road and to meet the other division in the Lombard plain. Charles himself pressed for-

ward by Mont Cenis. In the eighteenth century travellers allowed seven days for the journey from Geneva to Turin, given regular relays of horses and experienced guides for the more mountainous stages. At the least thrice that time would be required by an army however unencumbered. The road was dangerous as well as difficult; for the traveller, in threading the long gorges by which the actual pass is reached, often skirts the edge of a precipice, while stones and boulders loosened by the rain threaten to fall upon him from the cliffs above. In other places the road passes over streams which are difficult to ford, or through valleys where the sun is never seen in the winter months. Few of the Franks can have known the road except by hearsay; their naïve wonder and alarm are vividly recorded by the pen of Eginhard.

The news of their coming preceded them, but Didier felt secure in the advantages of his position. He gave orders to wall up the mouths of all the passes and came with the bulk of his army to the foot of Mont Cenis. At Susa, which from time immemorial had been reckoned the key of Italy, he planted his entrenchments and sat down to await the coming of the Franks. He rejected with scorn the very moderate terms which Charles now for the last time sent by his envoys. For a while his confidence seemed to be justified. Charles, finding the road before him blocked, was compelled to encamp in the pass and wasted several days in ineffectual attempts to storm the enemy's position. The Lombard poets tell with pride how the Franks in bands

of a thousand or more rushed forward to the attack, and how they fell beneath the iron mace of Adalghis, to whom his father had assigned the command.* But over-confidence made the Lombards careless. A picked body of the Franks—led, we are told, by a Lombard traitor—scrambled down an unfrequented track on the mountain-side and took the enemy in flank. The Lombards, confounded by these tactics, left their lines and baggage and fled in wild confusion with Adalghis at their head. Though pursued with great slaughter the main body escaped, some under Didier to Pavia, others under his son to Verona. The other cities of the plain, Vercellae, Novara, Piacenza, Parma, even Milan, the most strongly fortified of all and the glory of the kingdom, were left to their fate.† Effecting a junction with the army of Duke Bernhard, Charles reduced them at his will. He then closed in upon the doomed capital. Of siege-warfare he knew little more than his barbarian ancestors. He therefore drew his trenches in a circle round the city and sat down to starve the garrison into surrender (September, 773). An army of relief was not to be apprehended, for Adalghis, belying the trust which the nation placed in him, clung to his shelter at Verona, and the Duchies of the South hastened to provide for their own safety by offering

* The Lombard legends are preserved in the *Chronicon Novaliciense*, a late and otherwise valueless authority, Pertz, *SS.*, vii., 99.

† So the *Chronicon Novaliciense*: and the tradition is supported by what we know of the later course of the war. It is singular that Milan should have offered no resistance. Muratori prints a poem of the age of Liutprand which speaks with wonder of the walls, the towers, and the moat by which the old Imperial city was defended.

homage to the Holy See. In after years the Frankish minstrels loved to tell of Didier's despair as he looked out from the walls of Pavia upon the foe. Otger, the chief of Gerberga's adherents, is introduced as his companion.

"When they were aware that the terrible Charles drew nigh, they went up to a high tower to spy him from afar. When the baggage train appeared, Didier said to Otger: 'Is Charles in that great host?' But Otger replied: 'Charles is not yet there.' Then Didier saw the host of common folk and said confidently: 'Of a truth Charles advances in this host.' But Otger said: 'No, no, not yet!' The King fretted himself and cried: 'What then shall we do if he has more than these?' 'You will see,' answered Otger, 'the manner of his coming, but what shall become of us, I do not know.' . . . After that they see the bishops, the abbots, the clerks of the chapel, and their companions. Then Didier hated the light of day. He stammered and sobbed and said: 'Let us go down and hide in the earth from so terrible a foe.' And Otger too was afraid; well he knew the wealth and might of the peerless Charles; in his better days he had often been at Court. And he said: 'When you see the plain bristle with a harvest of spears, and rivers of black steel come pouring in upon your city walls, then you may look for the coming of Charles.' While yet he spoke a black cloud arose in the west and the glorious daylight was turned to darkness. The Emperor came on; a dawn of spears darker than night rose on the leaguered city. King Charles, that man of iron, appeared; iron his helmet, iron his arm-guards, iron the corselet on his breast and shoulders. His left hand grasped an iron lance. . . . Iron the spirit, iron the hue of his war-steed. Before,

behind, and at his side rode men arrayed in the same guise. Iron filled the plain and open spaces, iron points flashed back the sunlight. 'There is the man whom you would see,' said Otger to the King; and so saying he swooned like one dead." *

Charles spent his Christmas in the camp with his wife and children. He then went with a part of the army to besiege Verona. Adalghis did not fulfil the expectations formed of him; after a short resistance he fled alone to Pisa and took ship for Constantinople. There at the Court of Constantine VI. he dragged out for some years the miserable existence of an exile, only diversified by futile descents upon southern Italy. He was flattered and honoured by the Byzantine Court, who found him a useful card to play in their Italian intrigues. But the highest honours of the Empire could not console him for the loss of a kingdom. Tradition is ever kind to the disinherited, and Lombard poets loved to tell of his marvellous adventures; particularly how in later years he came disguised to the palace of Charlemagne in Pavia, how all the paladins were amazed at his presence and his might, and how when discovered he won by deeds of arms his escape from the bravest of the Franks. Nothing in his history appears to justify his poetic reputation. His nation glorified in him themselves and the past of the fallen kingdom.

* The saga is translated into Latin by the Monk of St. Gall, *De Gestis Karoli Magni*, II., xxvi. This author wrote for the Emperor Charles the Fat two books of anecdotes respecting Charles the Great; though almost useless for political facts, he is invaluable as a storehouse of information on social life and manners.

PAVIA.

(*From Brockedon's "Classical and Picturesque Views in Italy."*)

At Verona Charles found the family of Carloman. History is silent as to their fate; their names are never mentioned again. In all probability both mother and sons were consigned to obscure religious houses.* It was the usual fate of pretenders; their execution would have shocked the feelings even of that callous age; and we have the express assurance of Eginhard that Charles was naturally clement.

The fall of Pavia was delayed until June, 774. Strange tales of treachery are to be found in the sagas; but by that time the garrison must have been starving. From the day of the surrender Charles took the title of King of the Lombards. The man who had the best right to the title was sent with his queen across the Alps. They ended their lives peacefully in separate religious houses; the story that Charles plucked out the eyes of Didier is a mere fable. They left no sons but Adalghis; of their daughters one was abbess of an Italian convent, another was married to Tassilo of Bavaria, a third to Areghis of Beneventum. The first was without influence on history; we shall see that the resentment of the other two did something to determine the future career of their hereditary foe.

In the government of his conquests Charles introduced few alterations. A few districts were committed perhaps to Frankish counts, a few cities garrisoned with Frankish troops; but for the most

* Such appears to have been the fate of Otger. He is generally assumed to be the hero of the tract "Conversio Otgerii Militis," which is printed in the *Acta Sanctorum*, i., 4, p. 626. This Otgerius obtained leave from Charles to enter the monastery of St. Faro by Meaux.

part the Lombard dukes were, on submission, allowed to retain their offices. Far more important than these measures was the visit which, in the Easter of 774 and before the fall of Pavia, Charles paid to his friend Hadrian at Rome.

It was the first occasion on which he had seen the metropolis of Western Christendom; and no pains were spared to give him an impressive reception. To the Romans the Frankish Patrician represented the old Imperial governors of Italy whose title he had taken. His entry was therefore celebrated with all the pomp formerly reserved for the viceroy of the Cæsars. At a distance of thirty miles from the city he was met by the "Judges" of the city. They tendered him the homage and the banner of the civic militia of which they were the captains. The Patrician was in a special sense the patron of the city, Rome, and the honour was one which neither Charles nor the barons who offered it were disposed to undervalue. These magnates of the Campagna, whose fortresses in the city were an asylum for the cutthroats of all nations and whose ambition rarely aspired above a place in the Apostolic household, still gloried in the hereditary titles of tribune or consul, and bore themselves with all the pride of the Scipios and Metelli. Nearer the city the royal cortège met the militia itself, marshalled in its "schools" or guilds.* With them were mingled bands of boys

* There were at first seventeen and afterwards nineteen guilds at Rome. There was one for each of the twelve regions on the left bank of the Tiber, one for the Insula Licaonia, one for the Transtiberini; another five were formed by the five settlements of foreigners, Greeks, Saxons, Frisians, Franks, Lombards.

carrying branches of the palm or olive and singing hymns of welcome. Last of all came the Roman clergy in procession. At the sight of the crosses and consecrated banners which they carried, emotion overcame the King. He leaped from his horse to meet them with due humility and performed the remainder of his journey on foot. In this manner they brought him with shouts and songs along the old triumphal way to the suburb of St. Peter, where, unprotected by any fortifications, the massive bulk of the Apostle's church rose high above the "boroughs" of the foreign guilds.* Here in the vestibule the Pope with his cardinal priests and deacons had been patiently waiting since daybreak for the arrival of his guest. But before ascending the steps to meet him the King fell on his knees and kissed the threshold of the Apostles. It was the supreme moment of his life. To the Franks, as to all the Christians of the North, Rome was above all things the City of the Saints, within whose gates man was elevated above his worldly cares and brought into communion with all the holy spirits of the past. "The eighth of thy blessings," writes Cathwulph to Charles, "is that thou hast seen the golden and Imperial Rome."

Various records attest the importance attached by Charles and Hadrian to this interview. A medal struck to commemorate their meeting shows on the obverse the two allies joining hands over a Bible laid upon an altar. The legend runs "With thee as with Peter: with thee as with Gaul"; on the reverse are

* The Leonine Quarter stood outside the circle of the ancient walls. It was fortified in 848 by Leo IV. to protect it from Saracen pirates.

the words "Holy League." Hadrian, who had more good sense than scholarship celebrated the occasion with a set of rhythmic verses, offering the Patrician a very cordial welcome in very dubious grammar. They may be rendered thus:

"Glad and swift he comes in safety to the threshold of the Apostles;
And with praises and with anthems all the people hail his coming.
Prayers he bids us offer for him to the supreme Intercessor,
That his sins in youth committed may through Peter be remitted.
Then did Hadrian, Christ's Vicar, prophesy great triumphs for him;
God's own right arm to protect him, Paul and Peter for his comrades,
Giving him the sword of conquest fighting ever as his champions!"

The curious may read for themselves in the biography of Hadrian how the seven days of this eventful visit were spent. The real significance of it cannot be reached by enumerating the shrines which Charles visited and the monuments of the Imperial epoch which undoubtedly attracted his attention. We can point to more than one new idea awakened in the King's mind by his experiences—a project of reforming the Frankish liturgy and church ritual, a desire to use Italian scholars and craftsmen in promoting the material and intellectual advancement of his subjects, a greater respect for the possibilities of city life, a dream of building a new Rome in the

heart of the Rhineland. But of far greater importance was the general impression produced upon him by the ancient capital. Standing on the ruins of a world-empire, with Hadrian at his ear to suggest that he too might hope to rank in time with the Cæsars, he learned to regard himself as a heaven-sent conqueror and ruler. Brought face to face with the great traditions and greater hopes of the Catholic Church he conceived an undying respect for the power by which the conversion of the West had hitherto been guided. He resolved to take his place among her servants and missionaries, to promote her universal sway by the foundation of a realm comparable in extent with the old Empire, and in its essence Christian. The resolution was fraught with momentous consequences. It meant that now at length a Western statesman would deliberately attempt that fusion of the Imperial with the theocratic idea which since Constantine had been the secret of Byzantine power. It would be too much to say that either Charles or Hadrian grasped the significance of their compact, that they foresaw thus early the coronation of the year 800. The commission to subdue, to evangelise, to reform, which the Pope gave to the Patrician, had a precedent in that given by Boniface to Carloman, the brother and fellow-ruler of Pepin the Short. Nor was that precedent forgotten: Hadrian imitated Boniface in handing to his pupil a volume containing the canons of the Church as collected by Dionysius Exiguus. Time alone would show that the difference of contracting parties gave to the contract itself a different hue; that as Rome was greater

than Mainz, and Charles the King than Carloman the Mayor, so the new union would be in the history of the Church and the world of infinitely greater import than the old; that the "Empire of Franks and Romans" would be its natural sequel and a Christian Germany its enduring monument.

There is one transaction belonging to the time of this visit which merits a more particular attention, both for its bearing upon the subsequent conflicts of Papacy and Empire and because to Charles himself it caused a world of difficulties when he came to settle the administration of the Lombard kingdom. We allude to his renewal of Pepin's Donation. The extent of the gift, the powers conferred, the object in view, have been the subject of bitter controversy. To discuss all the conflicting opinions would be impossible. The barest summary must suffice.

The papal biographer tells us that Charles, at the request of Hadrian, read his father's deed of gift, caused a new copy to be made, and signed it in the presence of his magnates. The list of the towns comprised within that deed has been given in an earlier chapter (p. 67). All these, together with many scattered estates in the Lombard kingdom, were certainly restored or assured to the Pope in this year. The fact is mentioned by the Frankish annalists, who for this purpose may be regarded as impartial witnesses. But according to Anastasius the territories conferred by the Donation of Charles were of far wider extent. He mentions Venice and Istria, the Exarchate in its ancient extent, the duchies of Spoletum and Beneventum; besides

these, others "of which the boundaries are mentioned in the deed." At this point an ingenious interpolator has added the following statement: "And the boundaries are these,—from Luna, taking in Corsica, as far as the Lombard Mount (La Cisa in the Ligurian Apennines), thence to Parma, thence to Reggio, thence to Mantua and Monselice." This sentence, which appears to have been inserted under the influence of the myth respecting Constantine and Pope Sylvester, claims for the Pope all Italy except the plain of Lombardy. It needs no further consideration. But even the original words of the biographer are not without their difficulties. Venice and Istria were still unconquered; the claim of the Pope to Spoletum and Beneventum, though afterwards warmly pressed, was never allowed.

A probable solution is that the words of the Donation, as made by Pepin and confirmed by Charles, were vague; and that Anastasius gives the interpretation accepted by the Papal Court. It may, for instance, have given "the Exarchate in its ancient extent," and confirmed to the Pope "all territories of which he is now in possession." Venice and Istria had at a very remote period been administered from Ravenna; the dukes of Spoletum and Beneventum had long been under the protection of the Pope, who might therefore regard himself as in possession of their duchies. Most of the claims which were subsequently preferred by Hadrian and disputed by Charles may be explained on the supposition that Pope and King held different theories as to the proper boundaries of the old Exarchate.

In one sense all Italy, outside the Lombard kingdom, was part of the Exarchate; although that designation was more properly applied to the province of which Ravenna was the capital.*

The charter gave the possessions specified "to the use of the poor and the altar lights of St. Peter." Such a form of gift is very common at this period; it denotes an intention to bestow an "immunity" of the kind often granted by the Frankish sovereigns to other churches. The holder of an "immunity" acquired certain exemptions, seignories, and profits; he did not acquire the rights of sovereignty. In some respects the Pope had an advantage over other holders of "immunities." He claimed, for instance, and was at length allowed, a certain supremacy over the Archbishops of Ravenna. Sometimes, though not invariably, he appointed judicial officers in the towns of the Patrimony; and the keys of these towns were in his hand. As representing the *Dux Romanus* of Imperial times he had the acknowledged right to hold his own law-courts. He was a provincial governor at least as powerful as a Duke of Friuli or Spoletum. But with all this he was, in the eyes of Charles, simply the first and most richly endowed prelate of the

* It is only fair to state that the substantial accuracy of the account in Anastasius is assumed by Abbé Duchesne, in his recent monograph, *Les Premiers Temps de l'État Pontifical;* also by Kehr, in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, LXX., p. 385. Both suppose that the intention of Charles was to constitute an independent papal kingdom south of the Lombard plain. But if such had been the case, the letters of the Popes to Charles would certainly have noticed the agreement in explicit terms.

Frankish kingdom.* It is true that the claims of Hadrian sometimes went farther; but at no time have the rights of the Holy See been coextensive with its pretensions. We cannot imagine that the Pope and his subjects ever rendered that military service which was the chief burden of a Frankish subject; but we know that both he and they took the oath of allegiance to their Patrician and thereby acknowledged him as the lawful commander of the Roman militia. Hadrian, it may be objected, wages war against the Greeks of Naples for the possession of Terracina and does not dream of asking permission from the Patrician; but the objection ignores the fact that the war was for the defence of territories already forming part of the Roman Duchy; that in using his own discretion in the defence of his frontiers Hadrian merely did what every Frankish margrave was expected and required to do; finally that when in 780 Charles had reason to desire more friendly relations with the Empire he had no scruples in compelling the Pope to abandon his claims on Terracina. Similarly, while Hadrian maintained his own fleet for the defence of the Roman coast-line he rendered to the Patrician an account of the doings of that fleet. Or to take the question of jurisdiction: the Pope protests against the intervention of Frankish *missi* in the Patrimony, but still they

* It is doubtful whether Charles claimed a share in the election of a Pope, as of ordinary bishops. Hadrian was elected before the King had begun to take a keen interest in Italian affairs; Leo, before Charles was apprised of Hadrian's death. In 824 it was ordained that an Imperial *missus* should be present at the election and receive from the Pope-elect the oath of allegiance.

appear with regularity, choosing municipal judges, assisting even at the election of an Archbishop of Ravenna; also appeals lie from the Papal Courts to the court of the King at Aachen, and the time is coming when Charles himself will preside in a judicial session at Rome. It might be expected that the Patrician would at least in religious questions acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope, that while reserving to himself the last word on all secular questions, even within the Patrimony, he would leave religious problems to his ally, in whatever country they arise. There is no such division of functions; not even in this sense is the Pope a sovereign. The Pope indeed holds his synods, but they are of no more importance than those of the Bavarian or Lombard Church; their decrees bind only the churches which are in the province and obedience of the Pope. He cannot interfere in Gaul, or even in Lombardy, unless expressly asked for his opinion; that opinion the King and the national churches will adopt or reject at their discretion. Granting with Guizot * that the ninth century knows no definite criterion of sovereignty, the fact remains that, judged by any criterion whatever, the Pope's position in the Frankish realm is still that of a favoured subordinate.

* Guizot, *Civilisation in France*, Lecture xxvii. (Engl. tr.).

CAROLINGIAN GOSPEL BOOK COVER WITH IVORY CARVING.

FROM THE COLLECTION OF HISTORIC BINDINGS IN THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY, OXFORD.

rist in the centre treads down the lion, the serpent, the dragon, and the young lion (Ps. xci.). The twelve compartments contain scenes from the life of Christ.

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST SAXON WAR—RONCESVALLES

775–778 A.D.

THE main interest of the years 774–789 centres round two achievements; the first conquest of the Saxons, and the absorption of the Bavarian Duchy into the general system of the Frankish realm. Their result was to advance the frontier on the north to the Elbe and Eider, on the south-east to the mountains of Bohemia and Moravia. In other words, they left Charles the sole master of the lands which, taken together, made up mediæval Germany. By imposing upon the inhabitants of these lands a common ecclesiastical and secular administration, by subjecting them to one allegiance and one faith, by turning the thoughts of all to the East and to conflict with relatively uncivilised nations, he imparted to this mighty mass of peoples a political unity which was never to be destroyed. In this sense he is to be regarded as the creator of the German nation.

We must not err in attributing to him a deliberate consciousness of the goal towards which his efforts tended. His forward career was prompted

by different reasons on different occasions. He fought with the Saxons because they were pagans and robbers; with Tassilo of Bavaria because he was a disobedient vassal. In the north Charles was mainly prompted by zeal for Christianity; but in the south he laid violent hands upon a community which, though lately converted,* was no less devoted to Christianity than the Franks themselves. It was only after he had gone some way towards the conquest of both Saxons and Bavarians that the idea of establishing a scientific frontier dawned upon his mind; he did not take for his ideal a union of all the Teutonic races; he was prepared to accept Slavs and Huns as his subjects if they fell within the limits which he had fixed for his kingdom; or even to colonise the lands of Teutons with these aliens, if the Teutons proved refractory. His general object, as far as he had one, was to expand his power to the utmost bounds consistent with stability, and within those bounds to diffuse that form of faith and culture which had long been preparing within the bosom of the Frankish Church.

The conquest of Bavaria, though in its consequences a momentous event, was accomplished with little effort. That of the Saxons, on the other hand, taxed the resources of the Franks to the very utmost. By the year 789 Charles had accomplished eleven expeditions into the enemy's country; in

* Christianity became almost extinct in Bavaria after the withdrawal of the Romans. Reconversion began in the seventh century with the labours of St. Rutpert, St. Emmeran, and St. Amand. It was completed and the country divided into dioceses by St. Boniface (733–738).

most cases the whole of the national army went with him. From 772 to 780, and again from 782 to 785 the war was waged continuously with an infinite expenditure of blood and treasure. Other enterprises were undertaken but only when essential, or when the resistance of the Saxons seemed for the moment to be overcome.

By common consent of posterity the Saxon Witikind, although even the barest facts of his life are lost, has been singled out as the worthiest opponent whom Charles ever met. In legend the war reduces itself to a duel between the two. They fight in single combat for the prize of Saxony. When Witikind is overcome all the nation submits to be baptised.*

The legend is not far removed from the truth. The baptism of Witikind marks the birthday of united Christian Germany; and Witikind was converted by force rather than by arguments. On both sides the struggle was conducted with barbarity; and the barbarity of Charles is the more repellent of the two. The bribes and menaces by which he urged the conquered to the font, his wholesale massacres, his ruthless deportations, provoked at length remonstrances from the wisest of his advisers. His legislation for the Saxons was written in letters of blood. Like another conqueror, with whom we are more familiar, Charles was "stark above measure to all men that withstood him."

The only plea which can be urged in his favour is that of success. To the conqueror of Saxony

* Pertz, *SS.*, x., 576. From a life of the Empress Matilda, wife of Henry the Fowler and a descendant of Witikind.

mediæval Germany owed her brightest seats of learning and her most glorious dynasty. But for Charles there would have been no Corbie, no Herford, no Henry the Fowler, no Otto the Great. Long before the time when the results of his policy had become completely manifest, the Saxons had forgiven and were grateful to their terrible preceptor. In the ninth century a monk of their nation wrote of him:

"He swept away the black, deceitful night
And taught our race to know the only Light.
The strife was long, the peril great and sore,
And heavy toil and sleepless watch he bore.
But these be things all Europe has by heart;
All Europe in that mighty work had part;
The hosts of all his realm did he combine
To drag this people from the devil's shrine.
For who can turn fierce heathen from their bent
By soft persuasion and sage argument?" *

How great a change came about with conquest and conversion may best be realised by passing in review what is known of the traits by which these cousins of the English were originally distinguished from surrounding Teutonic peoples. The Venerable Bede, in speaking of the Saxon missions, remarks that the country was composed of *pagi* or provinces (the *pagus* is the German "gau"), ruled by separate chiefs. In time of war these independent princes

* From the *Metrical Annals* of the Saxon Poet. This author, writing late in the century (887–899), is seldom of value as an independent authority. He usually follows the *Vita Karoli* of Eginhard or the *Annales Francorum* attributed to the same writer.

cast lots for the temporary office of leader. From the laws of Charles and later sources we learn that the power of this aristocracy was limited by that of the people. Each *pagus* had a moot of the ordinary Teutonic type—at once a judicial and deliberative assembly. We find some mention of a national assembly which met at Marklo on the Weser; but the authority is doubtful. Religious unity there was of a kind. In those remote ages when the gods had not yet taken human shape, and the Saxon horde still wandered restlessly through the plains of Northern Europe, they carried with them as their household deity a sacred pillar of wood symbolising Igdrasil,* the "all-sustaining" earth-tree. Time passed, the horde settled upon German soil and was divided into many small communities, each cherishing new rituals and new deities. But still in the holy wood of Eresburg, not far from the Frankish frontier, the national palladium was preserved; and still the Saxons, at certain seasons of the year, congregated in Eresburg to honour the Irminsul. It was an imposing but a merely sentimental homage to the belief in their community of blood. Except on these occasions the Saxons showed small capacity for harmonious action. The *pagi* were united in four great federations—the Nordliudi, north of the Elbe; the Ostfali, on the

* And called Irminsul, "the all-sustaining pillar." Frankish writers describe it as carved in the likeness of a man (doubtless this had been done at a comparatively recent time) and adorned with votive offerings of gold and silver. Spelman gives an elaborate description, s. v. *Irminsul*, but on doubtful authority.

left bank of that river; the Angrarii, in the valley of the Weser; the Westfali, in that of the Ems. These federations generally pursued separate policies. The conquest of the country was ultimately due to their incapacity for common action. In all, however, there was the same tripartite division of society into nobles or adelings, freemen or frilings, serfs or "lazzi"; and in all the same penalty of death for the man who married outside the Saxon nation or his own class. This Draconian severity characterised all their laws. For the rest they lived in scattered homesteads and hamlets lying near fortified camps of refuge. They were hospitable to one another but suspicious of strangers, and particularly of missionaries, whom they regarded as the advance-guard of the Frank. They worshipped trees, groves, and fountains with sacrifices of cattle and sometimes of human beings, divined the future with runic lots of linden bark, honoured fortune-tellers, but feared the evil eye and burned with fire those who had the name of being vampires in human guise.

The success which the Saxons had hitherto enjoyed in their struggles for independence was due to a system of warfare carefully adapted to the geographical features of their land. Three ranges of low hills clothed with forest and converging on the district between the Weser and the sources of the Elbe formed at once a convenient asylum for noncombatants and a series of ramparts almost impenetrable to the mailed cavalry and heavy baggage-trains of the Franks. The assailable points were the

Shaded portion indicates Saxon Territory

Abotrites, Wiltzes, Sorabs } Slavonic Tribes which paid tribute to Charles

SAXONY

and the surrounding Peoples

three openings pierced by the Lippe and the Ruhr on the west, and by the Eder, a tributary of the Weser, on the south. By any one of these three routes an army could reach the centre of the Saxon position. Beyond and between the forests lay tracts of heath and marshy plains, inconvenient indeed to an invader, but offering no serious obstacle except at the time of the winter floods. Everything depended, therefore, upon the defence of the outworks. The method of the Saxons was to fortify every available eminence along the banks of the three rivers already indicated, and if these could not be defended, to withdraw for shelter to the forests until the hostile forces on reaching the plains dispersed themselves in scattered bands. They would then attempt night surprises, sudden flank attacks, or the interception of their enemy's communications. Their excellent archery and famous breed of horses made them peculiarly efficient as light cavalry, the class of troops which is most fitted for these irregular and daring tactics. At close quarters their defeat was inevitable; the chief problem for a Frankish commander was to bring about a position in which a general engagement could no longer be evaded; the chief anxiety, lest the winter season should compel him to retire before this object had been gained.

These conditions are well illustrated by the tentative campaign of 772. In July Charles marched from Worms with all the host, advanced along the Eder, and then by a leftward movement up the river Diemel took in flank the first line of defence.

Hoping, no doubt, to force a battle, he stormed the sacred hill-fort of Eresburg, burned the grove which surrounded it, destroyed the Irminsul, and distributed the treasures of the god among his followers. He then turned eastward toward the Weser. But the Angrarii, in alarm, offered their submission, came to a conference, and gave twelve hostages. The King was satisfied and withdrew to seek his winter quarters, while the enemy, caring nothing for the fate of their hostages, were left to brood over retaliation.

The Italian expedition of the following year gave them an opening of which they were quick to take advantage. War-bands of the Angrarii and Westfali, the two groups which had borne the brunt of the last campaign, crossed the undefended border. On the west they burned the church of Deventer and hunted high and low in the ruins for the grave of the founder, Lebuin, who had often plagued them with his unwelcome ministrations. On the south other bands entered the land of the Hessian Franks. The inhabitants took shelter in the fort of Buriaburg; their villages were burned to the ground; a like fate nearly befell the Church of St. Boniface at Fritzlar, but the stone walls defied the flames and, according to rumour, two angels in white raiment drove away the perpetrators of the sacrilege.

The true cause of the retreat was the unexpected return of Charles. Content with the fall of Pavia, he left the Pope to keep watch on the movements of the southern dukes and their Greek allies in Sicily; of further trouble in Northern Italy he ap-

pears to have had no anticipation. He had yet to learn that victory in the field is but the first stage of conquest. He returned with the idea of devoting his attention exclusively to the Saxon war.

The rapidity which formed his chief merit as a general was never more conspicuously shown. He had reached Ingolheim before the Saxons fully realised the fact of his return. Four picked bands of cavalry were immediately sent in pursuit; they entered the enemy's land, found them unprepared, and inflicted considerable damage (September, 774). Meanwhile at Kiersi the King held his autumn council of magnates and announced that he had resolved to offer the Saxons their choice between baptism and extermination. The design appears to have met with unqualified approval, for Charles was not the only man whose ardour of conquest had been fired by the exhortations of the Pope, and it is improbable that the difficulties to be overcome were as yet appreciated by any of the Franks. To question the morality of these forcible conversions occurred to no one. Only after a long and discouraging experience was the question raised even by men of enlightenment like Alcuin; and Alcuin had not yet appeared.

Action followed fast upon the heels of deliberation. In the spring of 775 Charles started with a host from Duren, taking this time the route of the river Ruhr. The Westfalian fort of Sigiburg was carried by assault; the defenders of Eresburg, warned by previous experience, dismantled it and fled before his arrival. With this success, however, the

King was no longer content. He had resolved to found in Saxony a system of hill forts resembling that by which the conquest of Aquitaine was assured. Both in Sigiburg and Eresburg he left Frankish garrisons—the first of those military colonies which were afterwards spread like a network over the ill-fated land.

At the ford of Hoxter some attempt was made to check his eastward march, but with ill success. The ford was passed and the Ostfali, whose country now lay exposed to attack, tendered their submission. Hostages and an oath of fidelity were taken from them; but in consideration of their complaisance the work of conversion was left to the peaceful efforts of missionaries. Some, induced by the example of their leader, Hessi, allowed themselves to be baptised at once. The motives of Hessi were probably no purer than those of other noble converts who were at a later period bought over by heavy bribes. But it is recorded to his credit that he remained unswervingly faithful through all the troubles which followed, and became in ripe old age a monk at Fulda.

The Angrarii followed the example of their eastern neighbours. But almost simultaneously Charles received a proof of the precarious tenure by which he held his conquests. At Lübbecke, a place not far from Minden, on the left bank of the Weser, he had left a camp to protect his communications. The officers in charge were in the habit of sending out their cavalry to collect supplies and explore. One afternoon as the foragers were returning, a body

of Westfalian horse mingled with them unobserved, entered the camp without being challenged by the careless sentries, and immediately set upon the Franks who, expecting no attack, were taking their siesta in the heat of the day. Many were slain before the others recovered sufficiently from their surprise to arm and expel the intruders. The Frankish captains added to the disgrace by concluding an armistice which allowed the Saxons to depart in complete security.

At the news Charles hastened back and, disregarding the terms to which his subordinates had pledged him, started in pursuit of the insolent enemy. He overtook them and did much execution. The result was that the Westfali, like their neighbours before them, came to him with offers of peace. Their sincerity was questionable. But Charles looked upon the war as finished. He wrote triumphantly to Hadrian recounting his success in the service of the Cross and promising a speedy return to Italy.

The summer of 776 proved that both in Italy and in Germany he had miscalculated the force of national resentment. The Lombards were the first to break the peace. The immediate cause of their defection was the irritating policy of the Pope. Hadrian was pious and honest, but these very virtues led him to pursue the recovery of St. Peter's lands with more zeal than discretion. His claims touched the interests of his most powerful neighbours. He quarrelled not only with the Archbishop of Ravenna, but also with Hildebrand of Spoleto,

Reginald of Clusium, and Rotgaud of Friuli, the three most powerful of the dependent Lombard dukes. The result was a dangerous league which aimed at destroying both Hadrian and the power of his Frankish supporter. Only the timely death of the Emperor Constantine Copronymus (September, 775) prevented the appearance of Adalghis with a Byzantine army in southern Italy. Areghis of Beneventum had promised to aid the cause of his brother-in-law; and with such allies the coalition might well have achieved a temporary success. Charles did his best by embassies and explanations to dissociate himself from the enterprise of Hadrian, and was so far successful that Hildebrand and Reginald accepted his protection as their overlord. But Rotgaud of Friuli was not to be conciliated. Aspiring to independence, he won over the cities of his duchy and prepared for war.

It was spring. Charles was at home in Frankland and free to meet the danger. With a select body of troops he marched in hot haste down the Brenner Pass. A single battle cut short the aspirations and the life of the rebel. Treviso held out for a while; and then an Italian priest opened her gates to the Patrician of his Church.* Some of the rebels were banished; many lost their estates. The destitution to which their families were in consequence reduced is described in moving terms by Paul the Deacon,

* *Chronicle of Verdun*, Pertz, *SS.* viii., 351. His name was Petrus, and he was rewarded with the Bishopric of Verdun. Another account affirms, with less probability, that he betrayed not Treviso, but Pavia during the siege of 774.

whose brother was among the victims of a too sanguine patriotism. The cities of Friuli, formerly free, now received Frankish counts and garrisons.

The rebels were not the only sufferers. For some years to come the Lombard kingdom remained in a state of confusion little short of anarchy. How little attention Charles devoted to its affairs may be inferred from the fact that not until 781 did he introduce his own silver coinage as the legal currency; from the disorders which began to invade the national Church; from the neglected condition into which some years later the highroads and their post-houses were found to have fallen. The acute distress caused by a famine of 779–780 seems to indicate the general disorganisation of industry. It is a proof, and not by any means the only one, that the designs of Charles far outran his means of execution. The first effect of his conquests was usually to change the condition of his new subjects for the worse.*

He appears to have considered that with the pacification of Friuli the object of his expedition was achieved; for he returned to the north without attempting to attack the still hostile Duke of Beneventum, or even paying his promised visit to Hadrian. Indeed the recrudescence of the Saxon war left him little choice. While he was celebrating Easter at Treviso the garrisons of Eresburg and Sigiburg were fighting for bare existence. At Eresburg the Franks evacuated the citadel on conditions, and it was dismantled by the enemy. At Sigiburg the

* See for these facts the *Capitulary* issued at Mantua in 781.

issue was more fortunate. The awkward siege-engines of the assailants did more harm to themselves than to those against whom they were directed. At length the blockade was raised—by a legion of angels, said the devout, but the more rationalistic writers inform us of a timely sortie from an unwatched gate.

Summer was far advanced when Charles returned. None the less, he summoned the host to meet him at Worms, and, to the consternation of the Saxons, appeared at Lippespring in the heart of their country before the year was out. Their hopes of resistance evaporated. The King found at Lippespring not an army, but a suppliant multitude. To consider the question of terms an assembly was forthwith held; another followed in the next year at Paderborn; the result was a new and more severe settlement. The Saxons gave new hostages; they bound themselves to Charles by the oath of fealty which their own law prescribed, and agreed if they should break it to forfeit their lands and liberty. Many accepted Christianity, though motives of policy as yet prevented the King from applying that ruthless constraint which he had sworn to use. Still he set his missionaries to work, delimiting the conquered country into several zones and appointing to each an overseer, who discharged the duties without the title of a bishop. The lives and fortunes of these pioneers are wrapt in obscurity. Sturm of Fulda is the only one mentioned by name; in this first conversion St. Lindger and St. Willehad, the true founders of the Saxon Church,

took no part. We gather from the scanty memorials of the early missionaries that the genius of Boniface had not descended upon them; even Sturm, the disciple of Boniface, had more of the statesman than of the evangelist in his composition. Christianity was at first presented to the converts as a dry collection of dogmas and anathemas. Its preaching was composed of invectives against the old worships; its catechism of barren formulæ. The candidate for baptism was thus examined:

Q. "Forsachistu diobolæ?"
(*Q.* Forsakest thou the devil?)
A. "Ec forsacho diobolæ."
(*A.* I forsake the devil.)
Q. "End allum diobolgeldæ?"
(*Q.* And all devil-worship?)
A. "End ec forsacho allum diobolgeldæ."
(*A.* And I forsake all devil-worship.)
Q. "Gelobistu in got alamehtigan fadær?"
(*Q.* Believest thou in God the Father Almighty?)
A. "Ec gelobo," etc.
(*A.* I believe, etc.)
Q. "Gelobistu in crist godes suno?"
(*Q.* Believest thou in Christ the Son of God?)
A. "Ec gelobo," etc.
(*A.* I believe, etc.)
Q. "Gelobistu in halogan gast?"
(*Q.* Believest thou in the Holy Ghost?)
A. "Ec gelobo," etc.
(*A.* I believe, etc.)

It cannot be wondered that Christianity made little progress when it offered no more than this to

a race nurtured on the old wild myths of Hela and Valhalla, Thor and Odin; a race which imagined deities dwelling in every oak and spring and rock; which peopled fell and forest with vampires, nixies, and were-wolves; which saw in every phase and change of nature the token of strife between the powers of good and evil. Their life was a wilderness of pitfalls and snares; without the traditional auguries and amulets they dared not leave their hearths; till the sacred furrow was drawn about the homestead they could not sleep secure; should they fail to celebrate the feasts and processions of the earth gods, blight and hail must inevitably take their harvest. The new faith banned these ancient safeguards and offered them no equivalent. It even added to their fears by bringing in an Evil One to whom mankind was a special object of hatred. It was hard and cold and empty, meaning, as the Czechs, their neighbours, sang, nought but bowing to the gods of the Franks and cleaving all one's days to a single wife. So stood the case at first, and it was well for Charles that in after years he found preachers of livelier sympathies and more moving eloquence—men able to strike at the root of the old faith by their tale of the Heliand who with his life-blood purchased for mankind the victory over all the powers of ill,

> "And having harrowed hell did bring away
> Captivity thence captive us to win."

For the present, however, Charles was content with Sturm and his fellows. The conquest seemed

complete, except for one small circumstance. Witikind, a chief of the Westfalians, not yet so famous as he afterwards became, failed to appear with the rest at Paderborn. "Conscious of many crimes," says the historian—from which we infer that he had already played an important part in the war—he fled to Sigfrid, King of the Danes, who had married his sister. But the incident did not disturb Charles. So secure was he that he began at this time to build a royal "vill" in Paderborn, a site to which he was attracted not less by its natural beauty than by its strategic advantages. The plan of his buildings accurately reflected the spirit of the conquest. Side by side with the palace rose a church, dedicated to the Saviour of mankind. It was the seed from which afterwards grew not the least famous of the episcopal towns of Northern Germany.

Before Paderborn was completed he gave a still more striking proof of his false confidence by undertaking an expedition to the opposite corner of his wide dominions, crossing the Pyrenees and assaulting the outworks of the Ommeiad Emirate.

This enterprise, apparently so purposeless, has puzzled his historians. Sound statesmanship demanded a continued residence in Saxony. If new enemies were needed, these might easily be found among the predatory tribes of Sorbs and Wends beyond the Elbe. But it was always thus with Charles. He delighted to take up a great scheme in the intervals of rest allowed him by another. Life was short and the future uncertain; since he

had so many things to do, he must do them all at once. Men of his self-confident, impetuous nature do not trust overmuch to their successors.

But why should he molest the Saracens from whom, since the wars of Charles Martel and Pepin, Gaul had so little to fear? Legend supplies us with one answer. In the romance of the pseudo-Turpin, a production of the twelfth century, we are told that Charlemagne, having conquered innumerable cities and nations, desired exceedingly to be at rest. But as he lay awake one night he looked at the Milky Way above his head. He then noticed that the Way began above Friesland, the most northerly of his dominions, and ran southward across the heavens, still overarching the broad lands of the Empire, until the foot of it rested on Galicia, which was outside the Empire. He marvelled what this might mean. Then in a vision St. James the Apostle called to the Emperor and said that his body, unknown to Saracen and Christian, rested in that distant soil. He commanded Charlemagne to rise and deliver Galicia from the heathen. Thrice the vision was repeated, and the third time Charlemagne obeyed the call.

Of the motive suggested by this myth contemporary annalists say nothing. Eginhard briefly alludes to "the hope of conquering certain cities." It is the biographer of Lewis the Pious who first suggests that the King desired to help the Church in Spain. This writer naturally adopts the tone which commends itself to his devout patron; his testimony, taken by itself, counts for very little.

There were no doubt political reasons for the expedition. That the power of the Ommeiads was already waning, that Gaul had little to fear in the future from their arms, could hardly be known to statesmen north of the Pyrenees.* In any case it was advisable to strengthen the Aquitanian marches, to overawe the Gallo-Romans by the spectacle of the national host, to give them another enemy than the Frank to fight against.

On the other hand, every age has some sentiments which lie so deep that they are rarely put into words. Hatred for the Saracens, compassion for the Christian subjects of the fallen Visigoths, were among the sentiments of this kind which influenced the age of Charles. The Khalifate of Baghdad was too remote to be dangerous; Pepin the Short exchanged courtesies with El-Mançour, and Charles with Haroun Al Raschid. But common usage demanded that the Saracens of Spain and Africa, albeit admired for their mastery of the arts and sciences, should not be mentioned without an epithet of abhorrence. The kings of the Asturias and the bishops of Toledo were in constant communication with the Christians of other lands and no doubt did much to foment this feeling. Good churchmen sighed for the hour when the Carthage of St. Augustine should be revindicated for the Cross, and Christian synods should make the laws of Spain as in the past. Charles had received from

* It appears from the letters of Hadrian that Charles alleged as a reason for the expedition his fear lest the Saracens should invade Gaul.—Jaffé, *Mon. Carolina*, p. 201.

Pope Hadrian the idea that war with the heathen was his peculiar mission. He was equally prepared to serve the Church on the Elbe or on the Ebro.

The historians of Spain have not hesitated to compare Charles unfavourably with Abderrahman of Cordova, the sovereign whose territories he now invaded. If we consider merely the relations of Abderrahman with his own countrymen this opinion can hardly be maintained. Perfidy, suspicion, bloodthirstiness, are clearly stamped on the principal actions of his life. But as regarded the Spanish Christians, he followed a course which makes the Saxon policy of Charles appear doubly odious by the contrast. They were no worse off than under Visigothic rule; probably their material interests were benefited by the change of governors. Their religion, despite occasional insults, was in general tolerated. They kept their churches, and their clergy were exempt from taxation. Their aristocracy was swept away, but the serf, the small landholder, and the artisan were undisturbed. All free men paid a heavy poll-tax, graduated according to their rank, and landholders a further impost of twenty per cent. on their gross revenues. But the State gave them in return an adequate system of justice; on the whole they were content. A Frankish poet remarks with scorn that in some cases they avowed their preference for the rule of the Saracen. It was not the Christians who invited Charles to Spain; the call came from Saracen conspirators against the existing dynasty. Abderrahman was the last representative of that family which the

Abbassids had supplanted at Baghdad, and owed his present position in Spain to the defeat of an Abbassid sovereign. North of the Ebro there was a powerful group of emirs who hated him as a usurper. Disappointed of help from Baghdad, they turned to Charles. At the Mayfield of Paderborn in 777, three of them, Abou l'Aswad, Ibn Habib, and Al Arabi, the governor of Barcelona, appeared, offering to place themselves and their subjects in the hand of the Christian King.

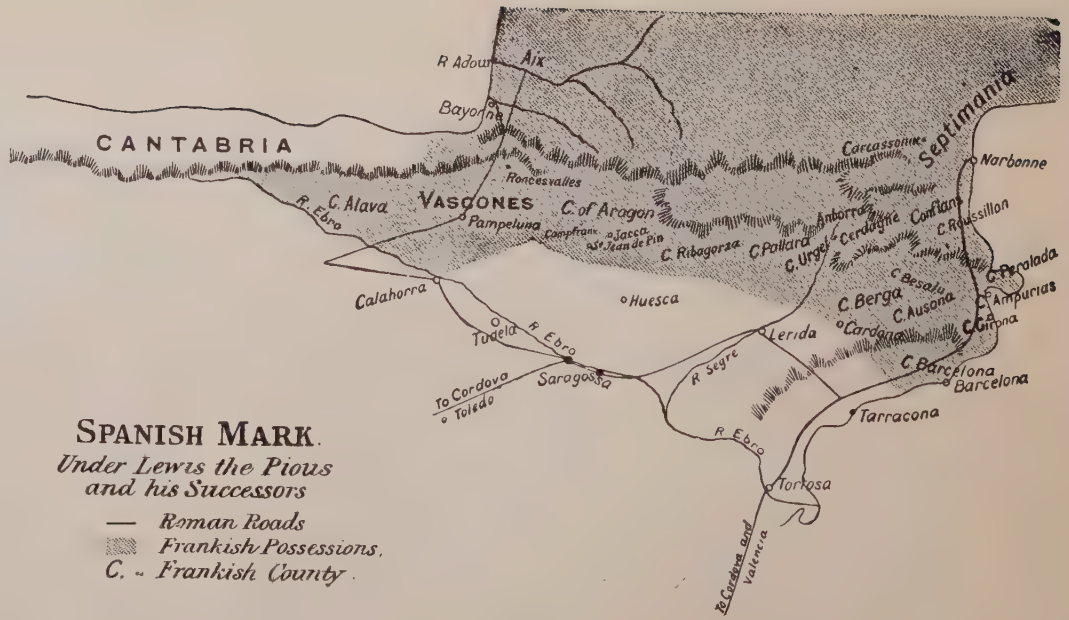
Charles readily assented and a plan of campaign was framed before the envoys returned. Ibn Habib promised that on his appearance in Spain the King of the Franks should be joined by an army raised among the Berber tribes of Northern Africa; the others undertook that they would use their local influence in his behalf. The King fulfilled his part of the compact in 778. Shortly after Easter he started from Cassineuil for the Pyrenees. Contingents of the Bavarians, Lombards, Burgundians, Austrasians, Provençals, and Septimanians followed his banner and formed a considerable host which, as usual, marched in parallel columns. Duke Bernhard led one along the seacoast, by way of Gerunda and Barcelona; Charles, with the other, took the direct road to Pampelona. Saragossa was fixed as the meeting-place; for this town, commanding as it did the passage of the Ebro, formed the first object of the invaders.

From the first there were disappointments. Ibn Habîb had brought his Berbers to the coast of Murcia some time before the arrival of the King.

The other emirs regarded his action as premature and refused to coöperate. He was quickly assassinated by an emissary from the Court of Cordova and his army melted away. Although on the arrival of Charles Pampelona, Huesca, Gerunda, and Barcelona opened their gates, the boasted influence of Al Arabi could not seduce the citizens of Saragossa. The King reached their very walls only to retire in discomfiture before a desperate sortie. He turned back in wrath and disappointment. Attributing his ill-success to treachery, he seized Al Arabi, who alone of the surviving emirs had shown zeal in his cause, and led him away captive with the hostages whom he took from the Spanish towns. Still he did not abandon the hope of returning at some future time. The proof is that he destroyed the walls of Pampelona, to leave the pass of Roncesvalles defenceless.

Of the defeat with which Roncesvalles is associated we know little.* The *Song of Roland*, which is our chief epic authority, cannot, in its present form, be traced higher than the eleventh century. The Court annals devote a few vague words to the subject, and Eginhard is hardly more precise. The "Gascons" were the assailants, and one may conjecture that the name designates the highlanders of Navarre. The dismantlement of Pampelona supplies

* We preserve the name of Roncesvalles for its associations. But Charles did not use the pass now known by that name. He followed the old road which crosses the mountains some distance to the west, as shown in the map of the Spanish Marches which we give (facing p. 113).



SPANISH MARK.

Under Lewis the Pious and his Successors

— *Roman Roads*

Frankish Possessions.

C. = Frankish County.

a probable motive for their attack. They laid an ambush for the rear-guard and the baggage-train, took much plunder, and slew certain of the Palatine officials—the "Paladins" of romance—who were in command. Amongst these were Eggihard, the seneschal, and Roland, the warden of the Breton March.* The epitaphs of both these warriors are extant. They tell us, however, nothing definite except the date of the fight (August 15, 778) and the fact that even at the time the tragic occurrence furnished a theme to the national minstrels. The defeat was considered a great calamity, and the King made every effort to retrieve it; but the aggressors had disappeared under cover of darkness and could never be found. Such is the bare record of history. The romantic story of Ganelon and Marsilio, of Roland's blast upon the "oliphant," and how the sun stood still in heaven for three whole days while Charlemagne pursued his vengeance may best be studied in the *Magnanime mensonge* of the pseudo-Turpin.† Here, then, we leave this expedition—a mere episode amid the more serious transactions of the reign, which by the caprice of fortune became the root of a whole epic literature. On other occasions in this reign the Frank faced the Saracen, but Charles was not present in any of the later campaigns. In the end the result which he had

* The warden of the Breton March was at all times a considerable person; one of the few great vassals who was allowed a private mint. We reproduce (p. 114) a coin stamped with the name of Roland.

† For this romance *cf. infra* Chap. XIII.

proposed was gained; the country between the Pyrenees and the Ebro became the Spanish March of his Empire. The acquisition of it was the greatest exploit of Lewis the Pious, and as such will be noticed in its proper place. The danger from Spain, as we said before, had never been considerable; and if the renown of the poetic Charlemagne depends upon imaginary conflicts with Islam, that of the historic Charles the Great rests on the more solid basis of his actual services to civilisation and the Church in Germany.

COIN STRUCK BY ROLAND.
(Prou.)

CHAPTER VI

SECOND SAXON WAR—BAVARIA—SETTLEMENT OF GERMANY

(779–800 A.D.)

AT Roncesvalles Charles experienced the first check of his career. The spell of good fortune was broken, and the next twenty years were chequered with domestic sorrows and public calamities. In Germany, in Italy, in Northern Spain and in the Armorican peninsula, his armies swept all before them, but in these armies, among his own friends and vassals, traitors sprang up; the cup of success was tinged with gall. It was the price which he had to pay for greatness. Peoples hitherto loosely attached to the Frankish kingdom awoke with alarm to the fact that each conquest riveted the fetters more tightly on them; at the very heart of the kingdom, in the Rhineland, the nobles chafed against the increasing pressure of the central government. The triumphs of the King placed him too high above them for their safety. He "bestrode their narrow world like a Colossus;" their love turned to fear, and fear to hate. During these years the King walked in an atmosphere of

treachery and suspicion; there were times when his ascendancy seemed undermined, and his life hardly worth an hour's purchase. Few indeed were those whom at this time he could trust, old friends for the most part, and death made havoc among them every year. Sturm of Fulda was killed by the strain and stress of the Saxon troubles.* Hildegarde the Fair, to whose softening influence upon her husband all contemporaries bear witness, died in childbirth, "the one woman worthy to share the sceptre of so many lands." She was soon followed by the Queen Mother, Bertha, with whose hard rustic visage, coif, and distaff, there vanished from the Court the last check upon the license of her granddaughters, and from the royal council the one voice which could cry "Halt!" to the King in his most furious moods. Pope Hadrian lived indeed till 795; but religious and political differences estranged Charles from this early mentor. Though he mourned the death of Hadrian like that of a father, the King had grown to chafe against the merest suspicion of tutelage. He would think, he would act for himself. Perhaps posterity has benefited by his distrust of others; it was natural enough at a time when the temper of his wife all but proved his ruin, and a conspiracy was headed by his eldest son. Still it left him a lonely, embittered man; and this

* Sturm died in the winter of 779–780. Charles, during a Saxon campaign, employed him as the castellan of Eresburg; for he was never content that his ecclesiastics should confine themselves to spiritual warfare. Sturm was very old and sickened rapidly while at his post. He died a few days after the conclusion of the campaign.

period of his life, though to outward appearance more glorious than ever, though witnessing the consummation of his great life-task in Germany, is stained by cruelties which no considerations of policy can justify. He jested and made riddles with his scholars; he trifled in the arts and sciences with Alcuin; but the geniality was superficial, and his intervals of learned leisure taught him neither tolerance nor compassion. With a grim belief in the rightness of his purpose, and a total incapacity to see the enemy's side of the question, he crushed all opposition by brute force, and waved aside the remonstrances which assailed his ear in varying keys. Alcuin was the only man who claimed his entire confidence; and even Alcuin shrank aghast from some of the deeds which he heard or saw. Almost, if not altogether, supreme in matters of church reform and education, the Englishman wasted his breath when he delivered sage counsel on the Saxon war and the conversion of the Avars.

After Roncesvalles the first apprehension was that the reverse might encourage a rebellious spirit in Aquitaine. Charles had resided there for some weeks early in the year, and this brief visit had taught him how wide a gulf of prejudice still severed the Gallo-Romans from the Teutons of the east and north. In his programme of German conquest the former could never sympathise; the annual summons to distant campaigns chafed them beyond measure. To conciliate by an abatement of his requisitions was a plan which never occurred to his mind; he preferred to strengthen the existing means of coer-

cion. On his homeward way he halted to reorganise more straitly the lands within the Loire. In the northern districts, as Auvergne, Berry, Poitou, Saintonge, he placed Frankish Counts. Farther to the south he constituted the March or Duchy of Toulouse, comprising several counties and intended for a barrier against Saracen reprisals.

Either the fear was groundless or the precautions were effectual. Danger, when it came, broke upon him from another quarter. The Saxons, who would have paid with alacrity a mere tribute of cattle such as they had promised Pepin, could not endure the presence of Frankish garrisons or the ministrations of Frankish priests. In the summer of 778 Witikind returned from Denmark to his own province and received an enthusiastic welcome. In a moment rebellion was in full flood. The fort on the Lippe which Charles had named after himself (Carlstadt) was stormed and its palisades destroyed by fire. The Franks at Eresburg dared not venture out and take the field. Without waiting to attack them, the war-bands poured into Hesse, burning, ravaging, sparing neither age nor sex. The monks of Fulda, led by Abbot Sturm, took up the bones of St. Boniface and fled to a safe distance. All along the Rhine from Deutz to Andernach the invaders did their will. The Rhine itself could not check them; a war-band entered Köln and burned St. Martin's church. In fear and trembling the Austrasians sent to implore the assistance of the King and the army.

The year was now far advanced and the time of

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MARIN COUNTY
CALIFORNIA

AN ANGEL APPEARING TO ROLAND

FROM THE WINDOW AT CHARTRES

military service had expired. Charles therefore sent the Hessians to defend their own homesteads and spent the winter as usual in feasting, hunting, and deliberation. But in June, 799, he collected the whole host at Duren and marched eastward. The season was bad, a famine raging, and pestilence apprehended; these difficulties he only noticed so far as to order that in each cathedral church the bishop should say three masses and thrice intone the psalter, once for the King, once for the host, and once for the present tribulation.* Marching up the Lippe he found the forces of Witikind entrenched behind strong lines at Bocholt. He instantly attacked and stormed the position; it was the first pitched battle of the conquest, and one of the very few in which he was ever personally engaged. The mail, the close array, and the furious onslaught of the Franks made them an easy match for the Saxons in all hand-to-hand encounters. Some attempt there had been on the part of Witikind to supply the deficiencies of his soldiers' equipment by a secret trade with Frankish merchants. The smugglers were, however, detected in time, and an edict of this very year forbids with heavy penalties the exportation of mail shirts.

The army reached the Weser without further opposition. The Westfalians, according to their usual custom, offered homage as a means of gaining time, and their neighbours, who had hitherto kept clear of the revolt, renewed their submission. In the next year the King returned and, as in Aquitaine, proceeded to improve the organisation of his govern-

* See the Capitulary of this year in Boretius, i., p. 52.

ment. More mission-districts were mapped out, more churches built, more priests brought in. New forts, connected by roads and causeways,* were constructed on the hills and in the forests. After holding the Mayfield at Lippespring Charles crossed the Weser; at Orheim he was met by Saxons from the eastern districts and even from north of the Elbe, who tendered their submission. At Hohemburg, just north of the site of the modern Magdeburg, the Frankish host built a fort to mark the eastern boundary and hold the fords against the tribes beyond. Charles went in person to supervise the work. There on the left bank of the Elbe he came for the first time face to face with the advance-guard of the Slav. One of their tribes, the Abotrites, had already sent their envoys to him at Orheim. The Wiltzes and Sorbs were more bellicose, but not yet formidable to the Teuton. The King turned back without molesting them. He little thought that with this nomad pastoral folk his countrymen would one day wage a struggle for existence. Like Augustus, he had found his Euphrates, the natural eastern frontier of his realm; and the frontier it remained, with some slight exceptions,

* The *Annales Francorum* distinctly mention the roads, s. a., 785: "Vias mundavit." References to roads are rare in the Capitularies. In Italy and east of the Rhine no new roads appear to have been opened in this reign. The duty of maintaining the old roads and bridges was committed to the counts, and was perhaps rigidly enforced for military reasons. The art of bridge-building was at a low ebb among the Franks. The famous bridge at Mainz was of wood, except the piers, which were stone. Later in the reign bridges of boats were used on the Danube and the Weser.

until a Trajan appeared in the person of Otto the Great.*

But within this boundary much remained to be done. The year 781 was devoted to the more pressing problems of Italy and Bavaria. These settled, Charles returned to Lippespring. His first concern was to provide a complete administrative system. He did not, as in Aquitaine, import Frankish counts nor colonise the land on a large scale with Frankish vassals. He preferred to retain the existing tribal chiefdoms, only bestowing on each chief the title and the powers of a Frankish count. It was the system which his predecessors had pursued in Alemannia and Thuringia, and he himself in Lombardy. Later events showed that Saxony demanded a special treatment, but this original scheme of 781 may be defended against the charge of rashness. For the territories of the chiefs were small in extent; in Westfalia alone we can count upwards of twenty *pagi;* and the chances of a concerted conspiracy were proportionately slight. The sentiment of independence was weaker among the chiefs than the common people; comparatively few of his equals had fought on the side of Witikind. It is probable that, like the heads of Irish septs in Tudor times, they added in no small measure to their wealth and power by accepting the overlordship of their powerful neighbour, and were paid for their complaisance

* Later in the reign several expeditions were sent across the Elbe. But the Emperor was content when he had established a protectorate over the nearest tribes: they continued to be governed by their own chiefs, merely paying an annual tribute.

with a general license to appropriate the common-lands of the tribesmen. Many among them, through dwelling as hostages in Frankland, had embraced Christianity and had forgotten their antipathy to foreign manners. Some at least were secured by lavish bribes and gifts of estates beyond the Rhine. Their own countryman tells us that "now for the first time the needy Saxons learned to know the abundance of wealthy Gaul; for Charles gave to many lands and costly vestments, heaps of silver and rivers of mellow wine."*

In this year, or shortly afterwards, Charles issued a Saxon Capitulary which is equally remarkable for its drastic severity and for the completeness with which it placed the conquered nation beneath the yoke of the Church. The following articles need no comment:

"1. If any man despise the Lenten fast for contempt of Christianity, let him die the death.

"2. If any man among the Saxons, being not yet baptised, shall hide himself and refuse to come to baptism, let him die the death."

A number of offences against the Church, the officials of the State, and overlords are enumerated and marked as capital. Then follows a measure of wholesale confiscation for the endowment of missions:

"1. Let the men of every hundred give to their church a house, two hides of land, a male and a female slave.

* The *Saxon Poet*, s.a. 803. Alcuin, in a letter of 790 to Colgh the Irishman, acknowledges in general terms that bribes and threats were used. Bouquet, v., p. 607.

"2. Let all men, whether nobles, free, or serfs, give to the churches and the priests the tenth part of their substance and labour." *

Among the other articles one may be quoted for its ingenuity. "If any man having committed one of these mortal crimes in secret shall fly to the priest and after confession offer penance, by the witness of that priest let him be excused from death."

The intention was to conciliate the affections of the converts for the priests who could thus shield them from the rigours of the law.

To attack at once the religion and property of a nation is dangerous. The Saxons, thus plundered in the name of Christianity, hardly waited for the conqueror's departure to rebel. Again Witikind appeared to lead them, and if the other chiefs could have been brought to follow his lead, it would have gone hard with the Franks. As it was, the pagan champion found himself supported only by the middle and lower classes. The weakness of his party led him to adopt the dangerous expedient of an alliance with the Sorbs beyond the river Saale. They crossed the frontier into Thuringia and by their ravages created a diversion which was useful for the moment. But generations of border warfare made the Slav more hateful than the Frank to the Saxons of the border, and a mere minority threw in their lot with Witikind. For a short time, indeed, he carried all before him. The missionaries

* The Capitulary of 779 had already made the payment of tithes a legal obligation throughout the Frankish realm.

were hunted from Westfalia and the northern districts; the converts were murdered with atrocious tortures. At Suntal on the Weser, the rebels repulsed and almost exterminated a body of Frankish horsemen which had attacked them without waiting for the support of the main army. Two *missi*, five counts, and about twenty nobles of the first Frankish families were left upon the field. It was the most signal of the many checks which the King's operations experienced through want of skill and caution in his adjutants.

In spite of this success, the bulk of the nation remained estranged from the would-be deliverer. Some were jealous of his aspiring ambitions; some, again, were moved with pity for the persecuted Christians; all were weary of the war. When Charles, on hearing how his punitive expedition had been handled, collected a small force and at the close of the year hurried back to Saxony, he found that Witikind and his friends had scattered to the four winds. The other chiefs came to excuse themselves and deprecate his vengeance. They laid all the blame upon Witikind. The royal answer was that if Witikind could not be produced his aiders and abettors must suffer. Four thousand five hundred men were pointed out to Charles as having voted in the councils of the nation for rebellion. They were at once seized, collected at Verden, and massacred in cold blood. The letter of the law sanctioned this enormity; for in the recent Capitulary death had been fixed as the penalty for those who slew a royal official. And those who remem-

BAPTISM OF WITIKIND AND OF THE SAXONS CONQUERED BY CHARLEMAGNE.

FROM A XVTH CENTURY MS. ILLUMINATION IN THE BURGUNDIAN LIBRARY AT BRUSSELS.

ber how Sepoys were treated after Cawnpore will find the execution at least intelligible. But in all ages the unbiassed moral sentiment of mankind has revolted from that logic which proscribes the rank and file of a rebellion equally with its leaders. Considered coldly and as a mere question of policy, the day of Verden was one of those blunders which are worse than crimes. The nation was less callous than its hereditary leaders. Cowardice was not among the faults of the Saxon character; fury rather than terror was the predominant feeling among those who had escaped. For the first time tribal distinctions were forgotten; the entire people rose in arms and prepared to meet the Frank in the open field.

The next three years tasked all the strength of Charles. So intense was the heat in the campaign of 783 that his soldiers dropped and died upon the march. He lost Queen Hildegarde before he set forth, and his mother, Bertha, while he was still in the field; but the "fierce wrath," which the annals, forsaking their usual brevity, expressly mention, left him no time to think of private griefs. In a fight at Detmold he overthrew the Westfalian army; in another, near Osnabruck, that of the Angrarii. Long after his age the last-named field bore the ominous name of the "Hill of Slaughter." Next year there were no battles; slowly and deliberately the villages were burned, the cultivated fields laid waste. Nor did the winter bring any respite to the unhappy land. The army kept their Christmas with the King in the open plains along the Ems. After-

wards Charles took up his abode at Eresburg. By this time he had taken a new wife, Fastrada, the daughter of an Austrasian Count. She came to him now with her step-children and all the Court remained till spring in Saxony. Meanwhile the army, camped in the country round about, sallied forth at intervals to forage and destroy, the King sometimes directing them in person. In the spring reinforcements and supplies came from Frankland. The toil-worn host was marshalled at Paderborn and conducted over the Weser to destroy the last of the Saxon strongholds. So at length, as the exultant scribe records, "with open roads and no man to gainsay him, he went where he would through Saxony." The missionaries crept back from the refuges which they had found in Gaul, in Frisia, and Thuringia. Some resumed their labour at once. One, Willehad by name, had doubts and fears. He came and asked what he should do. "Do!" said Charles, "go back to your diocese in the name of Christ." * He went back and in due course was promoted to be the first bishop of Bremen (789). The Saxons had learned the strength of Christendom; and for ten years the work of the missionaries suffered no further check. At Verden and Munster, as well as at Bremen, bishops were placed in charge of the missions. Parochial churches arose on every hand; and religious houses in Frankland were especially enjoined to furnish labourers for the harvest field.

* The story is told in the life of Willehad (quoted in Bouquet, v., 451).

Charles, warned by previous experience, saw in Witikind the great danger to the peace thus established. The high-spirited patriot was still at large in the Bardengau; and the wild tribes beyond the Elbe were his devoted followers. The King sent envoys of Saxon blood to treat with him, asked for a conference, and offered hostages in pledge of good faith. Witikind and his bosom friend, Abbio, accepted the invitation. They came to the royal palace at Attigni and there, on Frankish soil, submitted to the formality of baptism. Charles stood sponsor to his former rival and loaded him with christening gifts. Witikind was allowed to take up his abode in Westfalia, where he lived to a green old age, faithful amidst all the rebellions of later years.* It was a conclusion to the struggle at least as creditable to the victor as the vanquished. From the line of Witikind sprang, in after days, Matilda, the mother of the first Otto. Her husband traced his descent on the distaff side from Charles. Thus in the Saxon dynasty met and mingled the blood of the two heroes whose conflicts were the birth-throes of united Germany; for the subjection of Saxony was assured when Witikind became a Christian. Sporadic and intermittent outbreaks, due in most cases to the burden of the tithe, caused Charles some trouble. In 793 and 797 the disturbances were almost universal, and Alcuin in despair ex-

* Such, at least, is the legendary account. The church at Paderborn was said to have been endowed by Witikind. In the contemporary Frankish annals there is no further mention of the Saxon hero after his baptism.

claimed that all the work must be done over again. But there was no leader and no unity of purpose. The rebels invariably scattered at the approach of the King with his host. Each outbreak was followed by extensive transportations and the settlement of Frankish colonies within the mutinous districts. In 794 Charles took away seven thousand Saxons; in 797, every third household; in 798, sixteen hundred of the chief men; in 799, "a great multitude." Thus each year saw the national element weakened, and the cords of bondage tightened. Although the northern tribes, encouraged by the example of their friends and neighbours, the Danes, remained in a state of ferment, they, no less than the Saxons of the Lippe, were by the year 800 an integral part of the Frankish kingdom. Roads and bridges, forts and "vills," churches and monasteries, were steadily constructed. Paganism still lurked in the forests; but the day of its ascendancy was over.

A second Capitulary, issued in 797, reveals a comparatively settled country. The King is perfectly satisfied with his rough principles of administration as fixed in 782. He can even afford to mitigate the laws by which they were enforced. A double wergild is now sufficient to protect the priest; the usual fine of sixty shillings takes the place of death as an adequate compensation for breaches of the King's peace. Five years later Saxony shares with the other provinces of the realm in the benefits of a great legislative reform; the national laws are amended and reduced to writing. At this point we

have clearly passed beyond the period of conquest and the reign of force.

Meanwhile, in the less turbulent parts of his dominions Charles pursued with unflagging energy the work of consolidation. The Italian expedition of 781 had important consequences for the peninsula. A Capitulary issued at Mantua dealt with crying evils both in Church and State. On the one hand it invested the Lombard episcopate with the necessary powers for maintaining ecclesiastical discipline, authorising them to inhibit the ministrations of vagrant and unlicensed clergy, and, when necessary, to demand the support of the secular arm in the person of the count. On the other it came to the relief of the poor freeholders who, under stress of famine, had sold their lands and goods at nominal prices, or commended them to a religious house; it struck at the growing abuse of vassalage, placing the royal vassals under the jurisdiction of the count, and forbidding the magnates to receive as their clients any men whose antecedents were unknown; it favoured commerce by the introduction of a new coinage and the abolition of all unauthorised tolls, and at the same time prohibited two thriving trades of which the first, that with the Saracens in Christian slaves, was a scandal to religion, and the second, that with the Greeks and Avars in arms and horses, was a treason against the State. These innovations were not all. Conscious that German affairs would engross more and more of his attention, the King had furthermore resolved to make two dependent kingdoms of the Latin lands beneath his

sway. In the future there should be three sovereigns in place of one; Pavia and Toulouse should have the rank of provincial capitals. For himself and his eldest son after him he would reserve the immediate rule of the German races, and a general suzerainty over the others. They should obey the laws which he made for them, march in his army when he called upon them, and receive from time to time the visits of his *missi*, but otherwise they should enjoy autonomy. In pursuance of this project he brought with him to Italy his second son, Pepin, now five years of age, and Lewis, who was younger still. Shortly after Easter they were taken to Rome and crowned, Pepin as King of the Lombards, Lewis as King of the Aquitanians. Immediately afterwards their father sent them with large retinues and trusty guardians to their respective kingdoms that they might grow to manhood among their own subjects. To conciliate the latter no pains were spared. Contrary to all the religious feeling of the age, the baptism of Pepin had been delayed till now that Italy might be the scene at least of his second and spiritual birth. Already the Court genealogists were at work tracing the descent of Lewis from the national heroes of Southern Gaul; this boy of three years old rode into his new kingdom on a war-horse in the dress and armour of an Aquitanian warrior.

National feeling was not the only obstacle to the settlement of Italy. The ambitions of the Pope Hadrian for his See had not slumbered in the last few years. Already forgetful of the mission which he had given to his patron, he showed signs of fret-

fulness that the King, in the pressure of his Saxon wars, neglected to extend the Patrimony of Peter. That Charles should come in person to Italy; that he should expel the Duke of Clusium and force Hildebrand of Spoletum to acknowledge the suzerainty of St. Peter; that he should plunge into war with the Patrician of Sicily and Areghis of Beneventum because they refused to recognise the papal claims within their provinces—such are the modest demands to be found in his correspondence. Those whom he threatened were not passive in their resistance. Areghis and the Patrician conferred together. The latter took up his quarters in the neighbourhood of Naples; and the allied forces prosecuted a vigorous border warfare round the disputed towns of Terracina and Gaeta. Rumour said that Adalghis was once more to be despatched from Constantinople to arouse the discontent of the Lombards, and in this apprehension we have the immediate occasion of Charles's present visit.

For the moment the danger passed away. Byzantine policy was in a state of flux. The great Emperor Constantine Copronymus had died in 775. His successor, Leo IV., followed him to the grave in September, 780. The Imperial crown devolved upon Constantine VI., a boy of ten years old, whose mother, the Athenian Irene, assumed the Regency and the whole direction of affairs. Intent upon reversing the religious policy of her husband's house, she was eager for a friendly arrangement with the Frank, which would leave her completely free for the revolution at home. When Charles

reached Rome all signs of warlike intention in Southern Italy had disappeared.

Had Charles been free from other preoccupations he might even now have seen a truth which forced itself upon him in later years, that the general traditions of Byzantine policy would always clash with Frankish interests; and that his only permanent safeguard lay in the reduction of Beneventum and the maintenance of a strong fleet in the Mediterranean. For the present he pinned his faith to a less drastic policy. His first step was to revise the Donation in such a way as to define more precisely the rights of St. Peter and to allay the apprehensions of the Lombard dukes; his second, to accept the overtures which Irene made to him through Hadrian. She proposed a marriage between her own son and Rotrude, the daughter of Charles. Her envoys found a ready welcome. Arrangements were made to instruct the little princess in the language and etiquette of the Byzantine Court. Paul the Deacon was summoned from his cell at Monte Casino to give her attendants a similar education. We may hope that the good monk underrated his own accomplishments, for he assured Charles that two or three syllables of Greek were all he had ever known, and that old age had made sad inroads on these acquirements of his youth; if the Franks depended upon his lessons they would be like dumb images among the mocking Greeks.* His pupils

* We derive this information from a poetical correspondence on the subject between Paul and Peter of Pisa. It is printed in Eümmler, *Poetæ Medii Ævi*, vol. i., p. 49.

ITALY (768-813 A.D)

Territories of the Papacy.
Lombard Kingdom & Duchies.
Byzantine Territories.

however, were not put to the test. Six years later the project fell to the ground, either, as the Franks say, because Charles could not bear to part with his daughter, or, according to the Greek version, because the purpose of Irene had been sufficiently served by the truce which her proposals secured.

Apparently the motives of Irene were at first unknown to Charles, and their declaration did much to produce the later estrangement. While in Hadrian the Empress had found a sympathetic confidant,* the Frankish Church still clung to the middle opinion of Gregory the Great, who, rejecting equally the extreme puritanism of the Iconoclasts and the extreme materialism of the Iconodoulics, permitted the use of images as aids to devotion but forbade their actual adoration. This opinion Charles was prepared to maintain even against the See of Peter. With a little reflection, he might in 781 have divined the reason for the unexpected friendliness of Irene. The fact appears to be that he was dazzled by the alliance offered to him. The dream of linking Rome to Constantinople, of uniting beneath his descendants the divided hemispheres of civilisation, was to Charles what the dream of an Asiatic Empire was to Napoleon. This is attested both by legend and by the course of his later diplomacy.†

* For this fact and the whole subject, v. Hefele, vii. (Eng. trans.). Also Mansi, *Concilia*, xii., 984, 1056, 1057.

† The monk of St. Gall, i., 28, quotes Charles as saying of the Eastern Emperor: "O utinam non esset inter nos ille gurgiculus! Forsitan divitias Orientales aut partiremur aut pariter participando communiter haberemus."

These were not the only results of the Italian journey. We date from it the commencement of the Carolingian Renaissance; for it was during the Easter of 781 that Charles met at Parma and enlisted in his service the famous Alcuin. Now, too, the first step was taken towards the reduction of Bavaria.

Although Tassilo showed remarkable forbearance in the course of the Saxon war, he had been more active on the side of Italy. His wife, Liutberga, eager for revenge and the restoration of her exiled brother, was urgent that Bavaria should combine, to this end, with Areghis and with the Greeks. She spoke to willing ears; her dower lands in Southern Tyrol formed a bone of contention between her husband and the counts of the Lombard border. The Duke had ceased to acknowledge his obligation as a vassal. Like a king he held assemblies of the Bavarian nation; like a king he issued laws. In his charters the name of Charles is never mentioned; they are dated "in such and such a year of the reign of Tassilo." Equally independent was his Church; the bishops of Bavaria owned no Metropolitan but the Pope.

Want of leisure compelled Charles to try diplomacy before resorting to force. He brought the influence of the Pope to bear upon his adversary. The manœuvre was dexterous for Tassilo was completely in the hands of the Church. The bishops of Passau, Freising, Ratisbon, and Salzburg dictated his laws; their representatives sat beside him on the judgment seat; the Bavarians looked to them,

rather than to the Duke, for orders.* Tassilo submitted to the orders which they now imposed. He appeared in the autumn assembly of the magnates at Worms, renewed his oath, and gave hostages for its observance.

Here matters rested until the conclusion of the Saxon war. The year 785–786 suddenly revealed a network of conspiracies and intrigues, in all of which the influence or example of Tassilo might be seen at work. First came a secret union of the Thuringian nobles; a certain Count Hardrad took the lead among them; their object was the murder or deposition of Charles. Some unspecified acts of severity formed the provocation, and Eginhard traces these to the harsh influence of Queen Fastrada, herself a countrywoman of the conspirators. The King was informed in time and seized the ringleaders. Three perished in a vain attempt at resistance; of the others a few were blinded, and all were banished to distant quarters of the kingdom. Immediately afterwards the designs of Areghis called Charles to Italy in the depths of winter (786–787). The Lombard duke had renewed his alliance with the Patrician of Sicily, had built a new and strongly fortified capital at Salerno, and finally had caused himself to be crowned and anointed by the bishops of his realm. This last measure could only be regarded as an open defiance of the Franks, and a repudiation of their claim to suzerainty. After spending his Christmas at Florence, Charles marched in full force to the borders of

* See for these facts the Bavarian synods under Tassilo. Pertz, *Leges*, iii, 458 folioed.

Beneventum. It happened that the preparations of Areghis were still incomplete. He therefore humbled himself, offering his younger son, Grimvald, as a hostage and agreeing to pay a yearly tribute, to rase the walls of his strong places, and to make his subjects abandon their national garb and shave their long, flowing beards. The terms were accepted and in part fulfilled. They were accepted because Charles had discovered that Areghis was not the only or the most dangerous opponent. Treachery was at work among the allies and the subjects of the Franks. The abruptness with which at this moment the King broke off the betrothal of Rotrude to Irene's son betokens a conviction that Areghis had received her support. The northern Lombards were also involved; on his return from the south, the King held an assembly at Pavia and condemned several to death. Last, but not least, he received reasons for suspecting that Tassilo had shown more than a passive sympathy with the cause of his brother-in-law. "The whole earth," says a contemporary poem, "rang with the news" of Tassilo's treachery.* Tassilo saw his danger. The conquest of Saxony, the pacification of Thuringia, and the submission of Areghis left him alone to face the forces of the Franks. Sorely against his will, he stooped to ask for the Pope's mediation; two envoys, one of them Bishop Arno of Salzburg, came to Rome to vindi

Cf. the poem by an Irish exile in praise of Charles. Dümmler, *P. M. Æ.*, i., 396. According to this author, Charles was for long unwilling to believe the stories; the apparent object of the poem is to say the best of both sides.

cate their master's innocence. Hadrian was moved by their tale. But Charles coldly replied that the breach was none of his making. He asked the envoys what satisfaction they were prepared to offer. On receiving the answer that they had no power to make a final treaty he turned to the Pope and insisted on the duplicity of Tassilo. Hadrian, also, was convinced; he threatened the Bavarians with his anathema unless they forthwith submitted. With this weapon in his hand Charles returned to the north and summoned Tassilo to the autumn council at Worms. Met by a contemptuous refusal, he put in motion three armies against Bavaria. One, commanded by himself, marched to Augsburg, a second, composed of Thuringians, Austrasians, and Saxons, to Ingolstadt, while that of the Lombards came up the vale of Trent to Bozen.

Only the reluctance of the Bavarians prevented the Duke from pursuing the conflict to the bitter end. The anathema had done its work; they refused to march against the Franks. Accordingly he submitted, came in person to meet the King, and surrendered the Duchy into his hand. With this humiliation of his adversary Charles was satisfied. He restored the Duchy in return for homage and fealty, and in the presence of the assembly handed to Tassilo a staff carved with the head of a man, the old Frankish symbol of possession. Tassilo gave hostages, among them his own son, and received splendid gifts—a war-horse and armour and a large estate on the Bavarian border (October, 787).

The last act of this somewhat tedious drama was

played in 788. Tassilo returned home smarting under his defeat, and still, encouraged by his wife, began to plot rebellion. When reminded that his son was a pledge for his good conduct, he said with an oath that if he had ten sons to lose they should not stand in his way; better to die a free man than to live a slave! As the first step he planned the expulsion of the King's immediate vassals, who formed no inconsiderable party in Bavaria, and sent to the chiefs of the Avars asking for their assistance. It was a fatal step to his prestige among his own subjects. Rather than admit the heathen to their land, the men to whom Tassilo had imparted his designs denounced him to the King. Charles kept his knowledge a secret. On appearing, as usual, at the annual Mayfield—it was held this year in Ingolheim—Tassilo was instantly arrested and put on trial before a tribunal of his peers. They unanimously declared him worthy of death, this being the usual punishment for treason. Charles, however, remembering his relationship to Tassilo, begged for a mitigation of the sentence. The Duke and his family were accordingly compelled to take the vows in separate convents. From that time forward Bavaria became an integral part of the Frankish kingdom. It was divided into counties, all of whose governors owed obedience for military purposes to a single "prefect," but the ducal dignity remained in abeyance. On the eastern border was formed, a few years later, the Nord-Ostmark as a bulwark against the Bohemians and Moravians. The four bishoprics remained for some time in their original anomalous

position. Finally, in 798, at the request of Charles, Leo raised Salzburg to the rank of a metropolitan see. The first archbishop was Arno, whom we have already mentioned. A friend of Alcuin, an acute thinker and learned theologian, he is nevertheless more to be remembered for his missionary work in the lower Danube plain than for his meagre contributions to the literature of his age.

Thus if Charles had given Saxony to the Church, the Church gave Bavaria to him. If Tassilo saw in the King merely the leader of those Austrasians whom the Agilolfings had so long defied, to the Bavarians Charles came as a champion of the Papacy against a traitor to the Catholic communion.

It must be owned that there is another side to the question. Some, even among the Franks, were not afraid to give it as their opinion that Tassilo had been unfairly treated. The wide-spread rumours of treachery upon which the King had acted in 786 were attributed to the agency of the devil. Nor is it possible to avoid the suspicion that Charles had from the first determined to oust his cousin and to annex Bavaria. The league with the Avars may have been to him a neither unwelcome nor unforeseen event. We may even see in the clemency of the victor some natural emotion of remorse. But such purely personal questions cannot be decided at this distance of time. One thing is certain—that Charles found some difficulty in representing the conquest of Bavaria as part of his great scheme for the extension of Christianity. In Carinthia and

Carniola the Bavarian bishops, encouraged and assisted by their duke, had done for the Church a work which might not unfairly claim comparison with that of the Franks in Saxony. It was as though to justify himself by greater feats than any which Tassilo had ever contemplated that the King now undertook the conquest of the Avars.

This is one of the lost peoples of history. The Slavs use a proverb "to disappear like the Avars"; and in fact these once formidable invaders have left behind them nothing but a name. The Franks were mistaken in identifying them with the Huns of Attila. Both nations came from the hive of Central Asia, but the Huns preceded the Avars by a century and the first swarm had almost disappeared before the second came upon the scene. It is to be regretted that no Frankish author describes the Avars. Theodulf or Eginhard might have done so with ease, for the envoys of the Khakhan appeared more than once at the Court of Aachen. Their plaited pigtails are the only feature of their appearance which we find expressly mentioned. We may, however, suppose them to have been, like other Mongols, yellow-skinned and almond-eyed, with flat noses and high-cheek bones. Giant and Avar are to this day synonymous terms in the valley of the Danube. But here tradition seems to be at fault; the Mongol is rarely conspicuous for his stature. The Avars were skilled in archery and horsemanship; a nomad life was that best suited to the genius of the nation. Of political organisation they were almost destitute; each tribe possessed a patri-

THE TRIUMPH OF CHRIST.

FROM A CAROLINGIAN GOSPEL BOOK.

(*From Middleton's "Illuminated Manuscripts."*)

archal chief, and all acknowledged the general supremacy of the Khakhan. When they first invaded Europe, in the latter half of the sixth century, they displayed a certain capacity for common action. They overran Pannonia, seriously alarmed the Empire, and more than once threatened to attack Constantinople. Justinian paid them tribute, and the Emperor Maurice only saved his army from destruction by negotiating an inglorious treaty. But the tide of victory soon turned the other way.

For civilised armies led by competent generals, the Avars were no match. The vigorous policy of Heraclius made the northern frontier of the Empire secure against them. Settling between the rivers Theiss and Enns, they devoted themselves partly to a pastoral life and partly to raids upon the west. Then the power of Bavaria grew up by degrees as a barrier between their greed and Italy. They sank into inertia, and lost their primitive unity. The several tribes built their own kraals, or rings, and became self-centred. The Khakhan lived west of the river Raab in the greatest ring of all and exercised a nominal suzerainty, which did not preclude his inferiors from negotiating with foreign powers and concluding treaties as their fancy led them.

The great ring was the wonder of their western neighbours. Immense treasures, the plunder of two centuries, were stored in it. It was protected by nine concentric ramparts, and whole villages were comprised within its circuit. Long after the conquest an old warrior who had helped to sack the

ring described it to a little boy. The boy tells us that he found the story tedious and yawned and tried to run away whenever it began. But when he, in his turn, grew old and garrulous he wrote down what he remembered of it for the entertainment of the reigning Emperor, Charles the Bald. "He said that the ring was fortified with nine hedges. One circle was as wide across as it is from Zurich to Constance. The hedge was made with stakes of oak and beech and pine. It was twenty feet in width, and the same in height. The middle space was filled with stones or clay, and the top was covered with green growing turf, and bushes were planted between. Inside these ramparts were villages and farms, so placed that a man could shout from one to another and be heard. Over against the dwelling-places narrow gates were set, both in the outer and the inner rings. The second hedge was built like the first; from thence to the third was twenty German miles, and so on up to the ninth, the circles growing smaller as one advanced. On both sides of each hedge were farms and houses so near together that they could signal with a trumpet one to another."*

Such was the nation to which Tassilo had turned for help. His appeal roused them to new plans of conquest and plunder. They did not appear in time to save him. But late in 788 they took the field. They were divided into two hosts. One directed its march towards the Bavarian frontier,

*The Monk of St. Gall, Bk. II., chap. 2 (ed. Bouquet, *Rer. Script.*, v.).

while the other entered Friuli. Both were repulsed with great slaughter by the counts of the Marches. But so much was their return apprehended that Charles went in person to Regensburg and made preparations for the defence of the frontier, constituting Count Gerold, the brother of Queen Hildegarde, prefect, or commander-in-chief, of the Bavarian forces. His designs went further than mere defence. All through 789 men were waiting to see "what he would do concerning the Avars," Although, as it happened, the restless movements of the Wiltzes called him back for the present to the Elbe, he sent an ultimatum to the Khakhan—the chief of his demands being toleration for the Christians of the border-land, and the withdrawal of the Avars from all the territories to which the Bavarians laid claim. Having exacted tribute from the Wiltzes, he returned to find, as he had probably expected, that the Avars remained obdurate. The year 790 was spent in preparations for an expedition greater than any which he had hitherto put into the field. In 791 he marched down the Danube and conquered the lands of the Avars as far as the confluence of the Raab.

Few of his campaigns are so minutely described or present so many points of interest. As usual, he arranged that several divisions should converge from different points of the compass upon the enemy's country. One under his son, Pepin, marched from Italy; it failed to come into touch with the main body, and therefore we have no detailed record of its movements. We are only told that it

achieved complete success. Another, comprising the forces from east of the Rhine, came through southern Bohemia. They were joined by a large force of the Czechs. In the upper valley of the Main, this people had already opened peaceful relations with the Frank; moreover they had grievances of their own to avenge upon the Avars. Charles himself marched with a third division along the southern bank of the Danube. The Bavarians descended the stream in boats, bringing with them the supplies of the host. At the confluence of the Enns all met and halted for three days to observe a solemn fast and sing litanies for victory. Then a formal declaration of war was sent to the Khakhan, and the armies continued their march on both sides of the river. The Avars, in consternation, abandoned their first line of forts (in the Wiener Wald). Some escaped, many more were slain or surrendered themselves. Thus the Raab was reached without serious difficulty, and half of the enemy's realm lay at the feet of Charles. At this point the approach of winter forced him to retreat. He had been fifty-two days in the field and had demonstrated the contemptibility of the Avars. No loss had been suffered by the Franks, except that of their horses which were in great part carried off by disease.*

* For this expedition we have, besides the annals, an account in a letter from Charles to Queen Fastrada (Jaffé *Mon. Carol*, p. 349). The letter is brief and soldier-like, but contains more than merely formal expressions of affection. The King complains that he has received no letter from his wife, and refers to her ill-health.

A statesman merely intent on the advantage of his kingdom would have been satisfied. No more was to be apprehended from the Avars; on the other hand, it was not practicable to incorporate them in the Frankish kingdom. He who would hold the vast plain in which they dwelt must first subdue the teeming lands by which it was flanked on either side. And this Charles realised. But the idea possessed his mind that Europe must be revenged for the injuries of the remote past, and that loyalty to the Church required him to give the heathen the choice between conversion and extermination. To the remonstrances of Alcuin, who pressed upon his notice the worthier duties which awaited his attention nearer home, he turned a deaf ear until the logic of facts convinced him. He remained that winter at Regensburg, fully intending to resume the war in the next year.

Various circumstances combined to defeat this resolution. At Urgel, in the Spanish Marches, a new form of the Arian heresy* had taken root and grown to formidable proportions. There was some danger that Gaul would be affected, and a synod was therefore held at Regensburg in the summer of 792 to refute the arch-heretic, Felix, Bishop of Urgel, and to reassert the doctrines of the Athanasian creed. Simultaneously there arose, among the nobles who had followed the King to Regensburg, a conspiracy of an alarming nature. The discovery of the design necessitated further delays and an autumn assembly to sit in judgment upon the of-

* *See infra*, Chapter vii.

fenders. After this there were ominous signs of discontent in Saxony, and news arrived that a detachment of the Franks, while sailing up the Elbe, had been taken in ambush and cut off to a man. It was impossible to undertake a distant expedition with discontent thus seething through the length and breadth of Germany. Nothing was done to further the war with the Avars except that the King caused a bridge of boats for the transport of troops to be built upon the Danube.

The plot which we have mentioned bore a striking resemblance to that of the Thuringians. It was originally framed during the Avar campaign by certain Frankish magnates who, on one pretext or another, had remained in Bavaria.* Like the Thuringians, they alleged as their excuse the intolerable cruelty of Queen Fastrada. We may speculate whether behind this particular complaint there did not lurk much more general grievances, as, for instance, the growing burden of military service and the stricter collection of royal dues. Yet the character of the Queen was a matter of no slight importance to a subject of Charles. To his wife,

* The authorities for the most part leave the place of the conspiracy in doubt. The *Annals of Fulda* say expressly that it was formed in Bavaria. The *Vita Eginhardi*, written thirty years after the events, betrays some confusion as to the circumstances; the author imagines that the conspiracy was detected in the winter. He may also be construed, though this is not necessary, as asserting that Pepin had remained behind in Austrasia on the plea of sickness. That Fardulf discovered the conspiracy is a fact, well authenticated. We have given in the text the popular version of his conduct as recorded in the Monk of St. Gall. The monk makes the mistake of supposing that the King was in Aachen at the time.

COVER OF CAROLINGIAN GOSPEL BOOK OF THE IXTH CENTURY.

however young or unfitted for the task, the King invariably left the management not only of the royal households, but even of the royal demesnes. Such had been the practice of German chiefs in the days of tribal sovereignty; and in this among other respects, Charles was faithful to the traditions of his race. That Fastrada abused her position appears certain. To prove the fact we have, besides the explicit statement of Eginhard, the significant reticence of Theodulf of Orleans. Commissioned to write her epitaph, Theodulf, not usually languid in his praises of royalty, can only remark that she has left her subjects the better half of herself, that is to say, the King.

The new feature of this plot is that a pretender had been provided. Pepin the Hunchback, the son of the King's first mistress, Himiltrude, chafed against the customary law which forbade him to hope for a share of the kingdom at his father's death, and was easily persuaded to join the rebels. They met one night in a church at Regensburg to mature their plans. A Lombard monk, Fardulf by name, happening to be there when they entered, concealed himself behind an altar and overheard their consultations. As an afterthought they searched the church and discovered him, but instead of putting him to death they merely imposed an oath of secrecy upon him. The monk, on their departure, hurried to the palace, clamoured for an audience, and, breaking through the sleepy guards, disclosed the urgent peril to the conqueror of his nation. The guilty persons were immediately ap-

prehended and put upon their trial before the assembly of the magnates. As in the case of Tassilo, the verdict was for death. The King showed himself less merciful than on previous occasions of the kind. Since the path of clemency had been tried with such ill success he is hardly to be blamed. He interceded for no one but his unnatural son, and this he did less from pity than from a politic reluctance to place the royal house on the same level with ordinary subjects. The Franks gave Pepin their permission to take the tonsure. He lived for twenty years in the monastery of Prum, and when he died hardly a single annalist thought the fact worthy of mention. He had been the puppet of a faction, and his friends perished long before him; some were hanged and the rest beheaded immediately after their condemnation. The example produced the expected result. Fastrada was the pretext of no more rebellions. Yet it was well for the peace of the Franks that she died only two years later, and that her place was taken by the gentler and more popular Liutgarde. Fardulf, the one remaining actor in this tragic incident, obtained in reward for his honest perjury the fat abbey of St. Denis. We hear of him in after-years as bearing the relics of the Neustrian saint before the host in Saxony.

It seemed as though the plot were to be the signal for disturbances in every part of Europe. The Saxons had sent envoys to the Avars and hoped great things from this alliance. In 798 all Saxony was up in arms. Meanwhile the Emir

Hischam raised in Spain the old war-cry of Islam, and sent the faithful to invade the lands north of Pyrenees. They ravaged Septimania, and Christian captives were led away to labour at the great mosque of Cordova. In Italy a new enemy had appeared. When Areghis, of Beneventum, died in 787 his subjects asked and obtained from Charles the restoration of his son, the hostage Grimvald. It was an imprudent concession. Grimvald swore allegiance and promised tribute like his father. But he took the earliest opportunity of renouncing his obligations. Pepin and Lewis were sent to coerce him. The united forces of their kingdoms marched on Beneventum and achieved a very indifferent success.

The simultaneous outbreak on so many sides was not fortuitous. Charles had presumed too much upon his resources. He had involved himself in too difficult and distant enterprises. The result had been to irritate his subjects and to encourage external enemies. The moral was that he must waste no more time upon the Danube. It was not without hesitation that he bowed to the inevitable. About this time he undertook to connect the valleys of the Main and Danube by a canal three hundred feet wide. The object seems to have been that he might use the naval forces of Frisia and the Rhineland in any future campaign. The problem of transports would have been greatly simplified by the success of the scheme. He surveyed the ground, collected many workmen, and, commencing at Bubenheim on the Altmühl, which is a stream

in the Danube system, pushed his excavations northward for a distance of some miles. Unfortunately the Frankish engineers were ill-fitted to execute a work which would have been no less useful for commercial than for military purposes. Owing to wet weather and the marshiness of the ground, the sides of the canal fell in as fast as they were dug; and Charles at length abandoned the work in despair.

From this time he left the war with the Avars entirely to King Pepin, to Gerold the Prefect of Bavaria, and to Eric Duke of Friuli. Lewis he sent back into Aquitaine to make good the defences of the frontier. He himself turned to ecclesiastical affairs and the pacification of Saxony. During the next six years he made as many expeditions to the Elbe and Weser, with the results that we have already recounted. In his brief intervals of rest he held synods and assemblies of whose work we shall speak in the next chapter. His period of conquest had come to an end, and that of organisation had begun.

Meanwhile his lieutenants on the side of Bavaria proved not unworthy of their trust. In 795 Duke Eric, guided by a friendly Slavonic chief, crossed the Raab and attacked the famous ring, which he stormed and plundered without serious opposition; for the Avars were at that moment in a state of civil war. In the following year Pepin, also, reached the ring. He took such treasures as remained and utterly destroyed the fortifications, so that in the next century the very site of them could hardly be identified.

Thus ended the last and least glorious of the great wars of Charles. The few survivors submitted; a leading chief came to Aachen and was baptised; his subjects professed their readiness to follow his example. Bishop Arno, of Salzburg, received orders to instruct the would-be converts in the rudiments of the faith. His teaching was, however, defeated by the oppressive weight of the tithe-system which Charles insisted on extending to the new province of the Church, in spite of eloquent protests from Alcuin. Many relapsed, and Pannonia remained for several years in an unsettled state. In one outbreak of 799, Eric of Friuli, met his death—an event to which Eginhard alludes as the second great calamity of the reign, the first being the loss of Roland. Some years afterwards the remnants of the Avars, now thoroughly cowed, returned to Christianity, and some, unable to protect themselves against the Slavs, on whom they had formerly trampled, asked and obtained leave to settle within the Ostmark. The Carentanians poured down from the hills to occupy the void thus created in the plain of the Danube. The remnants of the Avars mingled with the immigrant flood and we hear no more of them as a separate nation.

The Ostmark remained as before, the extreme boundary of the Franks upon the east; Germany could spare no colonists for Pannonia. The war had been one of extermination, and beyond extermination had produced no sensible results. Undoubtedly Europe lost nothing by the disappearance of the Avars. They had no lesson to teach

her, neither would they learn from her example. Yet we cannot help feeling sympathy with Alcuin when he pleads for greater moderation, and surprise that other courtiers should have ranked this facile and barren victory among the most glorious exploits of their patron. The offence which it punished was venial; the danger which it averted, imaginary. The Bulgarians, not the Avars, were the real enemy of Europe, and it was left to the Eastern Empire to hold them at bay.

The spoils of the ring are said by contemporaries to have been very considerable, and to a treasury which had little command of precious metals must have been exceedingly welcome. A large part of them was, however, distributed among the King's vassals and the principal churches of his realm. The first instalment arrived at Aachen late in 795 and out of it gifts were sent to Hadrian and to Offa of England. The Pope did not live to receive his share; his death occurred in December of this year. Offa survived him at most but a few months. The epistle which Charles sent with his gifts is the most authentic record of his negotiations with the English courts.

"To our beloved friend and brother, Offa, greeting. We thank God for the sincere love of the Catholic Church which we find expressed in your letter to us. As for pilgrims who wish to approach the threshold of the Apostles, let them travel in peace without any disquietude. If merchants come, let them pay toll in the accustomed places; we take them under our

protection. If they have any complaint let them resort to us, or to our judges, and they shall have justice. We send herewith somewhat from our store of dalmatics and palls to your bishops' Sees and to those of Ethelfrid, begging that you will have intercession made for the soul of Pope Hadrian; also for yourself a baldric, a Hunnish sword, and two silken cloaks." *

The friendship with Offa probably originated in the years when that King was intriguing to obtain the archiepiscopal pallium for Lichfield. So close was it in 787 that when dissensions (hereafter to be discussed), arose between Hadrian and Charles the rumour ran that the latter would combine with Offa to depose the Pope. Though this was not the case, the tale contains a grain of truth. Offa, for his own purposes, took a lively interest in several intrigues which centred round the Papacy, and was usually to be found on the side of Charles. In secular politics their relations were less harmonious. When Egbert of Wessex was expelled by Bertric, the son-in-law of Offa, he found shelter at the Frankish Court. The little kingdom of Kent had some hopes of obtaining the help of Charles in its resistance to the Mercian King; and in Northumbria, also, the faction of Offa was opposed by another leaning upon Charles for support. In 790 a quarrel broke out between the two kings, and war was contemplated. Alcuin, however, succeeded in effecting a reconciliation (791–792). The Chronicle of Fontanelle gives

* We have ventured to condense this letter. Circumlocutions are much affected in the epistolary style of the time; nothing is gained by a literal translation of them.

a strange reason for the difference: Charles, it alleges, on demanding the hand of Offa's daughter for his eldest son, received a counter demand that the Princess Bertha should be given to the heir of Mercia. That Offa should haggle over an alliance so honourable may seem unlikely. Yet the story is supported by the fact that the first overtures after 790 came from Charles. It follows that he attached no little value to the friendship of his brother of Mercia. And we find the explanation in the attitude assumed by Charles during the Iconoclastic controversy. He was at issue with both Papacy and Empire. Therefore he could not despise the support of the English Church. That support he gained by this unusual display of patience. English theologians joined in the momentous Synod of Frankfort (794) and reprobated the image-worship which Hadrian had approved. Hence the cordiality with which Charles addresses Offa in the letter we have quoted. The better known and more effusive document in which "Charles, most powerful of the Kings of the Eastern Christians," greets "Offa, most powerful of the Kings of the Western Christians," is, in the opinion of the best critics, a palpable forgery.*

*This letter is printed in Bouquet, *Rerum Scriptores*, v., p. 620. Jaffé (*Monumenta Carolina*, p. 335) pronounces against its authenticity.

CHAPTER VII

LEGISLATION—RELIGIOUS POLICY—THE RENAISSANCE

774–800 A.D.

THE influence of the Church moulded the career of Charles as a conqueror; the same influence is equally conspicuous when we turn to his legislation. We have seen that his first capitulary was ecclesiastical in matter; when, after ten years, he again takes up the pen, the constitution and discipline of the Frankish Church are still his usual themes. More secretly and indirectly the Church affected his secular legislation; very many of his injunctions to the laity bear reference to offences against morality and the canons; others dealing with commerce, education, the administration of justice seem to be inspired by contact with Rome. Each visit to Italy was followed by important reforms in Church or State. Sometimes the King returns with artists, teachers, theologians in his train; more often we discern that the general sense of responsibility as the custodian of a great Christian society is quickened in him by the lofty ideas

which Hadrian, greater in his words than in his acts, communicated to the Patrician of the Holy See.

The enactments of this period are not particularly copious. Two relate to Saxony, eight to Italy, five to the whole body of the realm, while several instructions addressed to the *missi* illustrate the detail of administration. Neither are they systematic. The important measures lie buried in lists of canons literally copied from ancient councils, among exhortations to keep the Lord's Day, to attend mass, to love justice, and to believe in the one true God.

One constitutional change can be discerned, namely, the more systematic employment of royal *missi*. This office was not unknown in Merovingian times; any commissioner despatched from the royal palace with a special purpose bore the name of *missus*. But from the year 789, when the conquest of Bavaria seemed to have completed the process of expansion, the *missi* become the recognised agents through whom Charles the Great transmits his laws and edicts to the provinces, or gathers information, or investigates and redresses the abuses of local administration. To all appearance, the *missi* of this kingly period (768–800) went their rounds at irregular intervals in any part of the realm to which the attention of their master was particularly called. Thus, in 790, on discovering that through the neglect of Lewis the Pious, the finances of the Aquitanian crown had fallen into an embarrassed state, Charles sent a pair of *missi* to effect the needful economies and reforms. Once or twice commissioners went on circuit through the

COVER OF CAROLINGIAN GOSPEL BOOK.

IN THE LIBRARY OF THE CATHEDRAL AT NOYON.

whole kingdom. In 789 and 792 they were charged to exact the oath of fealty from all men: "Thus I promise to my lord, Charles, and to his sons, that I am their faithful man and will be all the days of my life." On the latter occasion they also enquired in every province whether the counts judged all men by their own national law, as the King's will was. The first duty of the *missi* was to hear complaints against a count and, if necessary, to compel him to do justice. In cases of contumacy they paid a visit to the count's official residence and resided there at his proper charges until he bought them off by doing whatever they required in the interests of the injured suitor. Next they were expected to assist the count if any great vassal of the King obstructed the path of justice. Thirdly, they joined the bishop in periodical visitations, and punished laxities of discipline among the clergy, both secular and regular. Fourthly, they inspected the beneficial estates which the King had granted from the crown-lands of the province, reported any cases of improper use or waste, and exacted the usual dues and services. Fifthly, they enquired how the obligation of military service was discharged; and whether the count enforced it as he should.

As yet the office was in its infancy. We hear of no fixed circuits at this time, nor have the *missi* any law-court distinct from that of the count; when they make an appearance they supersede him for the time being, or sit on the bench beside him to see that he judges without fear or favour. Many

functions hereafter to be conferred upon them are not mentioned in these early laws. The men employed were of no considerable station, but usually chosen from among the poorer vassals of the Crown.

Next in interest come the measures which deal with commerce and public order. For the first time in the history of the Frankish kingdom a uniform system of weights and measures was introduced.* Similarly the coinage was reformed within a few years after the Lombard conquest. Before 774 there were no less than sixty-seven local mints; of these the greater number were now suppressed. The standard, too, was changed; henceforth twenty shillings went to the pound of silver, and twelve pennies to the shilling. To refuse coins of full weight and bearing the royal monogram became a serious offence against the King's peace. Coins not satisfying these conditions might be refused with impunity. In Italy the use of the old Lombard coinage was prohibited from August 1, 781. The new currency compares favourably with the old in purity, in weight, and in artistic workmanship. Unfortunately for us, it never before the year 800 bears the portrait of the King, although from time to time we find his emblem—a temple or the gate of a city—stamped upon one side.

Ordinances forbidding usury and fixing the price of corn prove that Charles borrowed his ideas of economics from the teaching of the Church. No canonist could blame severe measures against those

* His system of weights, known in medieval Germany as "Karl's weight," survives in the English Troy weight.

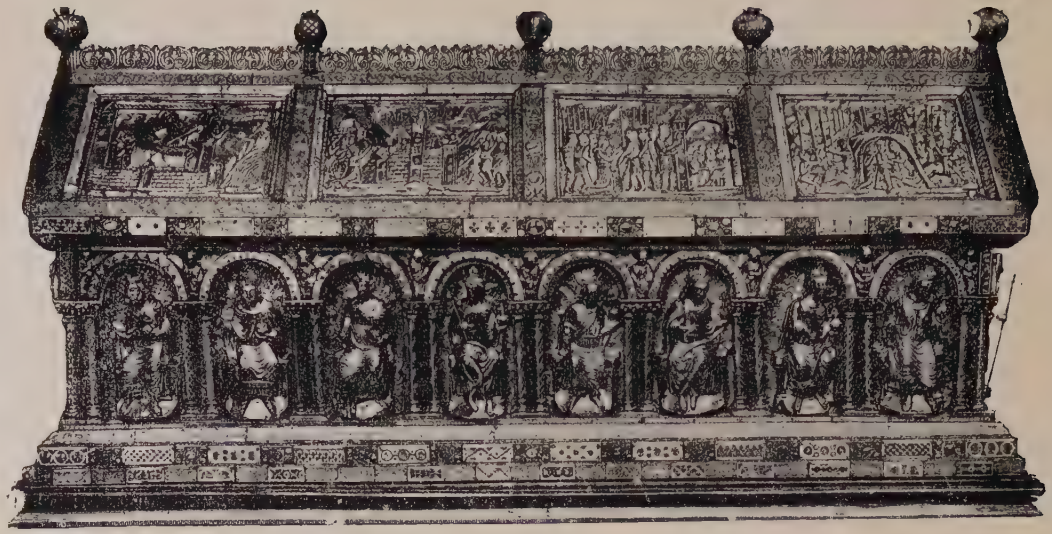
who attacked travellers upon the highway or levied illegal tolls; and to this extent the interests of merchants were protected. The repeated denunciations of gilds are due in part to the semi-pagan cults which some had fostered, in part to the conspiracies of the Thuringians and Pepin the Hunchback; later capitularies show that mercantile associations for mutual insurance were not regarded as contrary to law.

The King defends his ecclesiastical laws from the charge of presumption, by a reference to those of King Josiah—"not that I profess myself his equal in holiness, but because we are enjoined to follow in all things the examples of the saints." The apology is not superfluous. Sometimes in a mixed assembly of laymen and religious persons, less often in a purely ecclesiastical synod, he regulated the constitution, the discipline, and the doctrine of the national church. The constitution—for following in the footsteps of St. Boniface he restored the authority of the metropolitans and defined their provinces, confirmed the jurisdiction of abbots over their monks, of bishops over their clergy; made the payment of tithe a legal duty incumbent on all laymen, and the sentence of excommunication enforceable at law; regulated the privileges of "immunities," ordered suits between clerks and other persons to be heard by the count and bishop jointly. The discipline—for he forbade the clergy to marry or keep concubines, to enter taverns, to carry arms, to hunt or hawk, to meddle in worldly business. He lectured the bishops on the nature of their duties. He informed the laity of three cases in which they might

lawfully work upon the Sabbath, viz.: to bring up the baggage of the army, to transport food, to bury the dead. He altered the liturgy and church music; he introduced a new book of homilies; he ordered special fasts and services whenever he thought proper. In all these measures the opinion of the Pope is seldom asked. On one occasion Hadrian is allowed to delimit the provinces of Aix, Embrun and Tarentaise; on another to sanction the continued residence at court of Archbishop Angilramn. At times the Pope suggests a reform; command them he cannot, even in the Lombard kingdom.

In matters of doctrine the Pope's intervention would have seemed only natural. Then, as now, he was the recognised oracle of the faith. A book composed under the eye of the King himself, asserts that only those books are canonical and only those doctrines orthodox upon which the chief of all the Apostolic Sees has set the seal of its approval. In dealing with the Adoptianist heresy Charles was careful to put his theory into practice. The belief that Christ was a human being, adopted by, and therefore inferior to, the Father, was an old and popular tenet among the Spanish Christians. Some however impugned it; and Elipand, the Archbishop of Toledo, commissioned Bishop Felix of Urgel to confute them. The see of Felix, as belonging to the province of Narbonne, was subject to the Frankish church. Charles resolved to correct the bishop's errors. He submitted them to the Pope,*

* Mansi, *Concilia* xiii., 759. Letter of the Pope to the bishops of Spain and Gaul.



CAROLINGIAN RELIQUARY.

(From Dahn's "Urgeschichte," etc.)

and on obtaining from him a formal expression of disapproval proceeded to confute and crush the heresy in a series of councils, at Regensburg (792), Frankfort (794), and Aachen (799). On the first occasion Felix, having recanted, was sent to Rome, where he repeated his statement before Hadrian. In 799 Leo held a Synod at Rome simultaneously with that of Aachen, and reached the same conclusions. At Frankfort, two envoys from the Pope were present.

In the last named synod, however, Charles gave a remarkable proof of his independence even in doctrinal questions. Seven years previously the Empress Irene and her creature Tarasius, whom, from a well-grounded belief in his servility, she had preferred while yet a layman to the Patriarchate, convened the second Council of Nicæa and restored the worship of images with a difference; assigning to them adoration, not in the absolute sense, but such as becomes the symbol and dwelling-place of the divine.* The legates of Pope Hadrian were present at the council and he cordially approved of its decrees. The Latin Church had consistently maintained the use of images as aids to devotion and as a means of instructing the unlettered in the history of the church. Hadrian agreed that proper respect should be paid to them, and accepted the fine-spun distinction which the Greeks had drawn between worship and reverence. To Charles and his mentor Alcuin this distinction was incomprehens-

* For the whole of this incident v. Hefele *Councils* (English translation vol. vii.) and the *Libri Carolini*, which are printed in Migne's *Patrologia* among the *Opera Karoli Magni*.

ible. They drew up and sent to the Pope the famous *Libri Carolini* in which they proved, by the authority of the Scriptures and the Latin fathers, that the worship of images or pictures is mere idolatry. The conclusion is just, but beside the mark. Its exponents too were hampered by the necessity of admitting that the soundest authorities tolerated and that they themselves practised the worship of relics and of the true cross. This fact alone must prevent us from hailing them as the precursors of those Protestants who cited the *Libri Carolini* in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Hadrian returned an elaborate reply, which failed to produce conviction. The synod of Frankfort condemned the decrees of Nicæa, and apparently a schism was only prevented by the submission of Hadrian. Döllinger supposes a political motive for this departure from the principle of obedience to the Holy See. Already, he thinks, Charles had resolved to assume the Imperial title. His object at Frankfort was not so much to repudiate what he believed to be a heresy, as to discredit Constantine and Irene in the eyes of Christendom. Some facts may be alleged in support of this hypothesis. Hadrian evidently suspected an ulterior motive. In his reply to the *Libri Carolini*, he says that, although he cannot brand the Emperor and his mother as heretics on account of decrees so undoubtedly orthodox, he is willing to attack them on another ground, because they are in unlawful possession of estates belonging to St. Peter. In the *Libri Carolini* themselves—which were circulated at least among the clergy of the Frankish kingdom—

Irene and Constantine are personally criticised. The style of their documents, it is said, would make them the equal of God and His Apostles. The veneration paid to them and to their portraits is idolatrous. They call their own parents and predecessors heretics. In that case it is clear that they were educated by heretics and their faith comes from a tainted fount. And who ever heard before of a woman sitting and speaking in a council of the Church?

But these are arguments of a kind familiar to controversialists; and no special motive is needed to explain their introduction. Hadrian was engaged at the time in squabbles with Charles respecting the estates and jurisdictions of the Papacy, and was hardly in a position to know the true intentions of the King. The general tone of the *Libri Carolini* is that of men who are honestly engaged in the defence of the Catholic tradition, and really unable to understand the hair-splittings of their opponents. Moreover the authority of Gregory the Great was clearly on their side. To Charles and even to Alcuin it was incredible that there could be any legitimate excuse for the logical development of dogma. If a distinction was new they held that it could not possibly be true. Many passages in the correspondence of the latter prove his nervous fear lest the slightest appearance of innovation should produce a deadly schism. To Felix of Urgel he writes: "The end of the world is at hand. The love of many waxes cold. What should we weak mortals do but hold fast by the doctrine of apostles and evangelists." "The seamless robe of

Christ" is a metaphor which he employs with great effect.

Thus Alcuin, nurtured in the tradition of Theodore and Gregory the Great, proved himself more Roman than the Romans. Of Irish Platonism and Arabian rationalism he was entirely innocent. In his conflict with the Pope he relied upon the authority of previous Popes. Never was the influence of Rome more powerful in Francia than at the period when he was the final authority of Charles in matters ecclesiastical. The temporary estrangements between his master and Hadrian were ripples on the surface; they did not affect the broad stream of Frankish policy.

Had Alcuin been a mere theologian this fact would interest us little. He was also a teacher and an organiser of education. He initiated an intellectual movement, and inspired the legislation by which it was fostered. Here also he was dominated by Roman ideas, which in his Northumbrian home had preserved more of their original vitality than in the soil from which they sprang.

Although the conquest of the Lombards brought to the notice of Charles Paul the Deacon, Peter of Pisa, and Paulinus, afterwards patriarch of Aquileia; although the last named certainly and the others probably became, within a few years, honoured teachers at the Frankish Court, still the Carolingian Renaissance of learning hardly dates its commencement from their spasmodic and uncoördinated essays in education. Before any notable awakening of intellectual curiosity could be effected there must

arise a brighter star of scholarship than any of these excellent grammarians. Their special knowledge was, for those times, very considerable, their industry unwearied. Paulinus had judgment, Peter a sense of scholarship, and Paul a sprightly intellect. But all three were men of the cloister, absorbed in barren trivialities or in the pursuit of learning for its own sake. The preceptor of the Frankish King and his nobles should be a man of the world, versed in affairs and with a wide range of sympathies; he must conquer their respect by proving his superiority in their own fields of thought and action. He must have the insight to see the dumb perplexities of the untutored mind, the art to enlighten without arrogance, the tact to avoid those subjects for which his pupils were unfitted, and the eloquence to impress them with the charms of those towards which they showed the slightest inclination. Method would be needed, but the method must be the opposite of pedantic. Each pupil would have to be attacked on a different side; the matter and manner of the lesson must be varied in each individual case. Above all, the teacher would require to be furnished with a ready answer for the question, To what end? He must show the applications of his lessons to the conduct of life and the government of the State. Such teachers are never common, but Charles was fortunate enough to find one possessing all these requisites, and to find him just when the times were ripe for his influence.

Alcuin was the scion of a noble Northumbrian house which had already rendered good service

to Francia in producing St. Willibrod, the apostle to the Frisians. The future schoolmaster of the Empire cherished the memory of his illustrious kinsman, and was at the pains to write his biography in Latin verse. He himself became known to the Frankish Court in early life. A man of wealth who had embraced the clerical profession chiefly to avoid the entanglements and distractions of Northumbrian politics, he had travelled more than once through Gaul and Lombardy in quest of books and teachers. On one of these occasions he appeared at the court of Charles. The date must have been somewhere between 767 and 780. He was charged with a message from the King or the Primate of Northumbria, and thus came in contact with the ruler of the Franks. The scholar and the conqueror parted with feelings of mutual esteem, but probably with no idea of the close connexion in which they were afterwards to live. In 781 they met again at Parma, and this time the King extorted a promise that Alcuin would obtain the permission of his superiors for a protracted visit to the Court of Aachen. We are left to infer that Alcuin's fame for learning was already established. This may well have been the case. He had received his education in the famous School of York from teachers who had sat at the feet of the Venerable Bede, and he had assimilated all the learning, patristic, classical, scientific, which, from Canterbury, Rome, and Iona, had found its way to that greatest of English seminaries. He fulfilled his promise in 782, and, except for a few visits in

SPECIMEN OF CAROLINGIAN BINDING.

GOSPEL BOOK. IN THE LIBRARY OF THE CATHEDRAL AT NOYON.

the years 786–793, never revisited his native land. Northumbria had fallen on evil days. Civil wars, the Danish invasions, and the decline of the School of York—all these were pressing reasons why a peaceful scholar should cast about to find a new field for his energies. And in Mercia or Wessex, Alcuin would have been less at home than he was among the Franks.

He was forty-seven years of age when he came to Charles. Though loaded with rich benefices by his friend and master, he neither desired nor accepted an official position, and remained a simple deacon until his death. Strife and hurry were to him, he said, as smoke to sore eyes. His energies were unobtrusively bestowed upon the labours of writing, legislating, and teaching. In 796 he retired from court to the abbey of St. Martin at Tours, the most important of those which Charles had given him; and no solicitations could tempt him back. Shortly after the imperial coronation he asked and obtained leave to abandon all his preferments; and from that time till 804, when he was carried off by a paralytic stroke, he lived a life of rigid asceticism and meditation. In his epitaph he describes himself with characteristic modesty as merely one who was "a wanderer on the face of the earth" and "always a lover of wisdom." Yet to the last no personal influence was more widely felt in Francia and in Europe than that of the secluded English scholar.*

* To avoid a multiplicity of references, I may mention at once the chief authorities consulted for the following sketch of the Car-

In the first period of his career (782–790) he organised the School of the Palace and others of a similar kind; in the second he fought and vanquished the Adoptianist and Iconodulic heresies; in the third he founded at Tours a monastic school which became the parent of many more and fixed the type of such institutions for centuries to come. In all three periods he stands forth as the general adviser of his patron, as the centre of a literary circle, as the great authority to whom scholars, theologians, and practical statesmen resort for the solution of their difficulties.

The School of the Palace may have enjoyed an amorphous existence from the earliest times. Ambitious youths of good families resorted to the courts of the Merovingians and their mayors in the expectation of learning whatever a ruler ought to know. It would be to the interest of their patrons to provide such instruction. The royal chaplains and secretaries were possibly ordered to teach the aspir-

olingian Renaissance: 1. The Capitularies, which I quote by their dates as given in the edition of Boretius (*M. H. G.*). 2. The letters of Alcuin as edited by Jaffé, and his other works in Migne's edition. 3. The poems of Alcuin, Theodulf, Paul the Deacon, and Peter of Pisa (in the edition of Dümmler). 4. Eginhard's biography and the Monk of St. Gall. 5. The letters, etc., of Charles in Jaffé's edition. 6. Eginhard's tract on *The Translation of SS. Marcellinus and Petrus* (ed. Teulet). I must also express my obligations to the monographs of Mr. Bass Mullinger and M. Hauréau; to the Bishop of Oxford, as an authority for the facts of Alcuin's life (article *Alcuin*, in *Dictionary of Christian Biography*); to Mignet, *Études Historiques* (pp. 144–157); to Mühlbacher's chapter in his *Geschichte unter den Karolingern;* and to the *Histoire Littéraire de la France.*

ants in their intervals of leisure. But until Alcuin's day the school had neither organisation nor a curriculum which deserved the name, and the general body of the Frankish aristocracy remained innocent of the slightest trace of culture. Under Alcuin the school became an important factor in national life; it developed into a well-defined and highly favoured institution. Any magnate might send his sons, nor were humble antecedents allowed to exclude a boy of talent. Plebeian or patrician, it mattered nothing to Charles; he singled out the most proficient with rare impartiality and promoted them to vacant offices or preferments. Alcuin taught in person and enlisted all the other literati in the service. The King set the fashion of taking lessons, and all his family were put to school. Being a Court affair, the school accompanied the royal household in its wanderings. It was not hampered by elaborate paraphernalia. Alcuin sent envoys far and wide to purchase books for his pupils, but the library which he gathered must have been both small and portable. The primers of the elementary subjects — orthography, grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic—were written by himself. They are extant and printed in his works.

The knowledge imparted in the school was rudimentary. Alcuin himself knew no more of the liberal arts than could be gathered from the meagre compilations of Cassiodorus and Martianus Capella, from the encyclopædia of Isidore of Seville, from imperfect translations of the *De Interpretatione* and the Categories of Aristotle. Of astronomy he knew

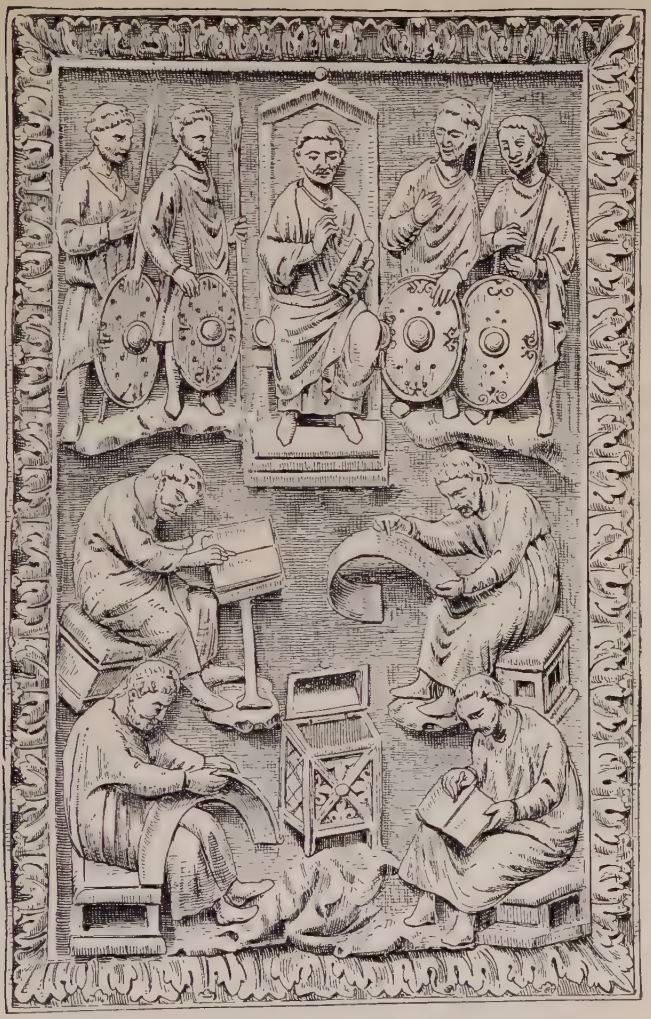
virtually nothing, of arithmetic and geometry very little. Though Boethius had rendered into Latin the standard works of Nicomachus, Euclid, and Ptolemy on these subjects, we are forced to conclude that Alcuin had never seen or never mastered these authors. His logic is confused, his rhetoric a glossary of technical terms. Of Greek and Hebrew he knew only so much as could be gathered from the quotations in St. Jerome. He was familiar with Virgil and the minor tracts of Cicero; but, in later life at least, discouraged on principle the study of pagan authors. Others, however, were less narrow in their preferences. Eginhard shows a considerable acquaintance with Suetonius and Livy; Theodulf of Orleans defends the classics, on the ground that they present profound moral truths in the form of allegory. Both these men were pupils of Alcuin. Paul the Deacon and Peter of Pisa contributed to the general stock a finer scholarship than his, and some knowledge of Greek, of history, and of classical antiquities.

Theology formed the chief occupation of the advanced students. Charles in the famous encyclical of 789 defends all other studies on the ground that they minister to this. "Since in the holy pages there are tropes, figures of speech, and the like, there is no doubt that a man grasps their meaning in proportion as he is trained in letters." The pupils made great progress in the study thus commended to them as the final cause of all their labours. Gisla, the sister, and Rotrude, the daughter of the King, write urgently to Alcuin in his retirement at Tours for explanations of doubtful passages

in the Fourth Gospel. They tell him that since receiving his lessons they have the keenest desire to be more deeply instructed. He sends them in return two bulky volumes of exegesis, and finds it necessary to excuse himself for not sending more. Lewis the Pious was already, before his father's death, despised by the Frankish warriors as one whose training had made him a monk at heart. The King, also, became a proficient in the science, though it must be owned that in his case the effect was the reverse of softening. It was his favourite recreation to bombard the Pope and Alcuin and any bishop whose opinion he valued, or whose flagging interest he wished to stimulate, with such questions as these: "What is meant by the ritual in the baptismal service? and what is the sevenfold grace of the Holy Ghost?" We do not know how Leo acquitted himself on these occasions. But one of the bishops, whom we suspect to have been a mighty hunter, solved his perplexities by persuading the good-hearted Theodulf of Orleans to write him a set of answers. Alcuin praises his master on the ground that he sets himself "to sharpen the wits of young men and to remove the rust of slothfulness" by these impromptu examinations. We gather from the case we have cited that the wits were sharpened, but hardly according to the royal intentions. At all events, the King set a good example to men of greater leisure than himself. A day or two before his death he was engaged in correcting the text of the Vulgate, with the help of Greek and Syrian scholars who trans-

lated their own versions to him. Nor was this a new departure. He had always been ready to defend the faith with the pen when his sword was unemployed. The general opinion is that he took some considerable part in drawing up the *Libri Carolini*. In his correspondence with Alcuin he is ready to suggest and criticise. In the confutation of the Adoptianist heresy he took the keenest interest. He even wrote with his own hand, for the benefit of the Spanish bishops, a statement of the true doctrine touching the Incarnation and the dual nature of our Lord. The beginning is not unimpressive: "This is the Catholic faith; since Catholic, therefore ours; we hope that it is yours also: That there is one faith and one baptism and one Lord Jesus Christ, very God and very Man, two natures in one person, the Mediator between God and men." But argument and open-minded discussion are not his forte. He passes rapidly from exposition to warning and expostulation. "Correct yourselves and hasten with a pure faith to join the unity of the Holy Church of God. Whence do you imagine—you who are so few—that you have discovered something more true than that which is held by the Universal Church in all the world?" Torquemada himself could not have expressed more forcibly the Church's abhorrence of the human reason. In controversy as in war Charles was always "the terrible King."

His attainments other than theological were, for the time, considerable. He knew enough Greek to understand the speeches of the Byzantine envoys. He learned his Latin grammar with Peter of Pisa,



FRANKISH SCRIPTORIUM.

(*From Vétault's "Charlemagne."*)

the other liberal arts with Alcuin. In the latter's dialogue on Rhetoric he appears as an interlocutor. Eginhard says that he began to learn writing, and kept the materials always under his pillow, but made little progress. This may mean that finer kind of writing used in making copies of books; yet it is far from incredible that even in his correspondence the King was dependent on a secretary. He was fascinated by the study of astronomy, although he had not even the Ptolemaic system for a guide. Among his treasures we are told of a planisphere made of precious metals, carved with the signs of the zodiac and the courses of the planets. Eager for knowledge of every kind, he turned his attention to several branches of science which lay outside the ordinary curriculum. By enquiries from foreigners and travellers he gained some knowledge of distant lands; histories, too, he loved and would have them read to him at meals. He caused the Frankish sagas to be collected, and began a grammar of his native tongue. He impressed upon his officials the necessity of studying law, and made medicine a compulsory subject in his schools. But he showed his usual prudence in refusing to let the Galens of the time prescribe for his ailments. We have a story relating to the Court physician which says little for his skill. His name was Wintar. Wintar was sent to attend upon old Abbot Sturm in his last illness, and gave him a mysterious potion. From that hour the Abbot grew worse instead of better. At length he cried with a lamentable voice, "The leech has undone me," and shortly afterwards

breathed his last. In fact, the Palatine school and its kindred institutions retained, in spite of the King's attempt to make them the training-ground of practical men, a strongly theological bias and bred in their alumni a morbid suspicion of all other learning.

The special enactments by which Charles attempted to promote the revival of learning are not without their interest, and may conveniently be noticed in this place. In 786 he brought back from Italy Roman singers to improve the services of his church. He established them at Metz and Soissons, and sent them the precentors of many churches to be instructed. This reform, projected but never carried out by Pepin the Short, was in itself of no great importance, but it illustrates the essentially Roman character of the Carolingian Renaissance. We are told that at Rome Charles heard the choristers of his chapel disputing with Italians as to the merits of their respective styles. He said to the former, "Tell me, now: Which is the better, the living fountain or the streams which flow from it?" They answered with one voice, "The fountain." He retorted, "Return, then, to the fountain of St. Gregory, for you have plainly corrupted the music of the Church." In the same spirit he reformed the Frankish liturgy, expelling the interpolations of local usage, revised the ritual on the Roman model, forbade the unauthorised introduction of new cults, and employed Paul the Deacon to compile from the works of the most revered Latin fathers a Homiliarium which supplanted the ill-chosen selections pre-

viously in use in Northern Europe, and afterwards became the basis of that now authorised by the Roman Church. It was the ignorance of the clergy which necessitated such reforms, and he set himself to remove this fundamental evil. About the year 787 he addressed to the bishops and abbots a circular letter on the subject of education. The study of letters, he says, is an essential part of the religious life. Good works are better than knowledge, but without knowledge good works are impossible. He has noticed with pain, in the letters addressed to him by the religious, that laudable sentiments are too often obscured by uncouth language. He, therefore, bids those in authority to find schoolmasters and see that all beneath their care are duly instructed. In the preface to the Homiliarium he deplores the decay of letters which the neglect of his ancestors had permitted, remarks on the corrupt state of the sacred texts, and invites his subjects to coöperate with him in removing their blemishes. In 789 he orders that in every diocese be established schools where boys may learn the Psalms, musical notation, chanting, arithmetic, and grammar. They are to be supplied with well-corrected copies of the Catholic books.

At a later period he commanded that every clerk should learn, among other things, reading and writing, the creeds, the Lord's Prayer, the book of the Sacraments and the book of Offices, the Penitential, the *Liber Pastoralis* of St. Gregory, and the pastoral letter of Pope Gelasius. Every layman should at least be instructed by his priest in the

Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the doctrine of the Trinity.

These efforts were not thrown away. Leidrade of Lyons reports in 813–814 that he has schools of singers, some of whom are qualified to teach others, and of readers who have learned to expound the Scriptures, as well as to avoid solecisms in pronunciation. Theodulf of Orleans established throughout his diocese parochial schools in which the clergy taught all children whose parents cared to send them, taking no reward except in the form of spontaneous offerings.

It will be observed that this system of education was entirely theological. Even arithmetic was introduced principally to enable pupils to calculate the dates of festivals. Those who could never hope to rule in Church or State had no occasion for the wider course of studies followed at the Palace. Alcuin's school at Tours is the type of the provincial academies. When he founded it his contempt for secular learning had risen almost to the point of fanaticism. Virgil and other profane texts were rigidly excluded. The school contained two grades or classes. In the first, beyond which laymen rarely passed, instruction was confined to the subjects prescribed in the Capitulary of 789; in the second, monks and other persons destined for the Church studied the Scriptures, the fathers, the canons, and so much of the seven liberal arts as might assist them in exegesis. The men who issued from this course usually became the abbots of German or Frankish monasteries. Raban Maur is the most

distinguished of them; his chief title to fame is that he originated the school of Fulda. The other schools founded on the model of Tours (for example, Corbie, St. Wandrille, St. Gall) were almost without exception monastic and intended for the education of churchmen. Within this narrow field their beneficial effect was considerable. But the general level of culture among the laity was not raised. Very few even learned to read or sign their names. To posterity these schools rendered a double service. They restored Latin to the position of a literary language, resisting on the one hand the invasion of German words, on the other the Gallo-Roman corruptions of inflections and of syntax. A correct orthography was reintroduced and a style formed which, if it owed more to St. Augustine than to Cicero, was none the less an adequate medium for the expression of current ideas. In the second place, the pupils became editors and copyists of such authors as had survived the wreck of ancient learning. The Vulgate, the Latin fathers, liturgical books, the works of Cassiodorus, Boethius, Bede, and those classical texts which contained nothing to shock the susceptibilities of the orthodox were carefully amended; and the chances of total loss were diminished by the multiplication of manuscripts. Alcuin laid down the first principles by which such labours must be guided; he also gave a splendid example of their application in his recension of the Vulgate. By collating a number of copies and by utilising the quotations to be found in Augustine and Jerome, he expelled many errors

of long standing and gave to the Western Church a text of the Scriptures far superior to those possessed by the Greeks.* The work was presented to Charles at Rome on Christmas Day, 800. Under the influence of Alcuin the scriptoria of Tours, Fulda, and the other leading monasteries were peopled with skilful penmen. The manuscripts of this period are second to none in accuracy and artistic finish. Often written in gold upon a purple parchment, and adorned with exquisite initial letters and illuminations, they are still more to be admired for the regular and legible alphabet, modelled upon the ancient uncial, which they brought into fashion. Slight as this merely mechanical reform may appear, it had the important results of making books more accessible and of diminishing the chances of error in future copies.

From the schools we pass on to the men who made them and were made by them. The pupils and assistants of Alcuin are in general more attractive as human beings than as authors. Their books are as barren as their lives are rich in interest. Devoting themselves, like their master, to minute theological researches, they produced a number of long and tiresome treatises in which the results of wide reading and painful lucubrations are brought to bear upon such problems as the inner meaning of baptism, the mode of the Incarnation, the grace imparted by the Spirit. In vain we turn them over and over to find any passage which displays in a

* Errors of the Eastern versions are quoted and reprobated in the *Libri Carolini*.

marked degree the merits of ordered exposition, closely woven logic, or perspicuous language. The lighter effusions of the school are scarcely more interesting. Master and pupils alike are prolific of banal epigrams and turgid compliments, of trifling riddles and insipid allegories. Were these written in a vernacular tongue they might at least have pleased by their ingenuous puerility. But they are in Latin verse of a peculiarly lame and formal kind. The prosody of Alcuin would at times disgrace a fifth-form schoolboy. Sometimes an unexpected touch of nature, a passing flash of satire, or an accidental piece of self-revelation lends interest to the shorter pieces; otherwise their value is merely historical. Of all the Court poets, Theodulf is the most readable. A native either of Spain or Italy, he is led by his warm southern nature sometimes to good-natured badinage of his equals, sometimes to fierce denunciation of the evils which ate like a canker-worm at the heart of the Frankish State. In his *Advice to Judges* he describes, with fiery contempt, the drunken count, the suitors coming with their bribes, the heartburnings and intrigues of the provincial law-court. We owe to him a sketch of the Palace circle, which shows quite another Alcuin than the grave figure of the *Acta Sanctorum*—a burly convivial figure, eating and drinking largely, and between the courses laying down the law on all things human and divine. Of Alcuin's own poetry, the following dialogue between Spring and Winter is perhaps the most favourable specimen:

"*Ver.*—I am fain for the cuckoo's coming, the bird that I love the best;
And there 's not a roof where the cuckoo deigns to pause in his flight and rest
And pipe glad songs from his ruddy beak, but will call him a welcome guest.

"*Hiems.*—Delay me the coming of cuckoo! The father of toils is he;
And battles he brings, and all men in the world, however weary they be,
Must rouse them from rest at his trumpet to brave land-farings and perils at sea.

"*Ver.*—The note of the cuckoo brings flowers and gladdens with honey the bee.
Sends the landsman to build up his homestead, the ship to the unruffled sea,
And the nestlings are hatched by his music, and the meadow glows green and the tree."

Beyond question, the greatest literary monument of the age is the biography which Eginhard wrote of his patron. Educated with the royal children, and afterwards employed at Court as director of public works, the future historian of the age had unrivalled opportunities for acquiring his material at first hand; from a careful study of classical historians he derived not merely a severe and weighty style, but also a true conception of artistic form. Both in manner and matter he is the best historian of the early Middle Ages. He is not absolutely impartial; he ascribes to his hero an antique gravity which hardly agrees with the impressions to be derived

A MEDIÆVAL PLANISPHERE.

The world according to the Spanish priest Beatus, who died in 798 (Turin copy).

from other sources: the ostentation, the love of adventure, the often naïve ambition by which the true Charles was characterised pass unnoticed in the pages of Eginhard. Of doubtful transactions he professes a prudent ignorance or supplies an ingenious defence; in some few cases he appears consciously or unconsciously to distort the facts. In reading him we must always remember the personal equation. Eginhard shared to the full the foibles and the prejudices of his time. The true man stands confessed in his tract, *The Translation of SS. Marcellinus and Petrus*. He tells us with the utmost simplicity how he sent to Rome to buy relics for his monastery. The supply was running short and the Pope had forbidden further exportations. But, with the help of a roguish cicerone, the historian's agent plundered a crypt and returned rejoicing. And Eginhard, secure in his remoteness from Rome, calmly records the pious theft to vindicate before posterity the genuineness of his treasures.

A tale of the twelfth century assigns Eginhard as a lover to a certain Princess Emma, whom it calls the daughter of Charlemagne. It is true that the wife of Eginhard was named Emma, but there is no evidence to connect her with the royal family; and the severity with which her husband adverts upon the amours of the princesses precludes the idea that she was one of the culprits. Concerning Anghilbert, the fellow-scholar of Eginhard, more authentic scandals are related. Anghilbert became private secretary to the King and used his opportunities

to form a liaison with the Princess Bertha. They had already two children when Charles, to stop the mouth of slander, allowed their marriage; and since Anghilbert was already in orders, the marriage was even more reprehensible than the intrigue by which it had been preceded. Four years later they took monastic vows together and entered the same religious house—yet another infraction of church discipline. Finally they quarrelled and separated; Bertha returned to the Court, where she was not long in finding other lovers; Anghilbert became arch-chaplain and one of the two chief ecclesiastical ministers of the King. The story illustrates at once the laxity of Court morals and the high standing which literary attainments conferred in this reign. Anghilbert owed his position chiefly to the scholarship which won for him the surname of Homer. He is not the only instance in point. The King encouraged all learned men to converse with him on a footing of equality. A society resembling the Italian academies of the eighteenth century formed itself under his patronage. In his intercourse with the initiated he took the name of David; Alcuin was Flaccus; Eginhard, Bezaleel; the ladies of the Court were admitted, also under classical names. The members exchanged verses and compliments; from time to time they banqueted at Court, criticised each other's works, and debated on topics of general interest. Meanwhile the wine cup circulated freely. Charles himself was temperate; the same could not be said of all his companions. Theodulf describes how faithful vassals, privileged

DOMINICAN COLLEGE LIBRARY
SAN RAFAEL,
MARIN COUNTY

to attend these feasts of reason, grew hot and argumentative with their potations or fell asleep while Alcuin held discourse.

In this patronage of literature we may discern something of vanity. The Austrasian chief aspires to be Augustus and Mæcenas in one; he must have his Virgil and Horace to sing the praises of his kingdom. It pleased him, also, to have men at hand who could answer the questions which occurred to his insatiable curiosity. Yet beneath these trivial motives there lay a settled policy, namely, that of utilising in his government all the available supply of intellect. The questions of Charles were not invariably frivolous; as head of the Church, he asked for clear ideas on the subjects of theological controversy; as head of the State, for assistance in forming a conception of his duties. And no scholar entered his service without finding himself, sooner or later, enjoined to undertake some work of public utility. To such men, as to the rude warriors whom he led into battle, he imparted some of his own fiery enthusiasm for the regeneration of society. If they had not genius, they were at least compelled to be industrious. "Work! for the night cometh," is the precept of Alcuin to his royal pupils; and Alcuin himself attests how literally Charles fulfilled this ideal, and lets us learn that he, for one, wore himself out in the service of this exacting master. Nor did the King confine his exhortations to the teachers. A variety of anecdotes bear witness to the minuteness with which he tested the working of his edu-

MARIN COUNTY
CALIF.

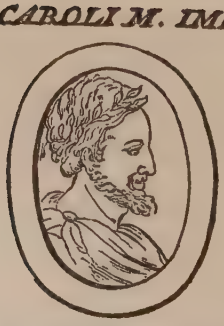
cational laws. At one time we find him coming to the Palatine school and questioning the boys; he puts the idle on one side and delivers a severe lecture to them, saying that industry, not noble birth, is the passport to his favour. At another he enters a cathedral, sees children brought to the font, and interrupts the service to catechise both them and their sponsors; they prove to be ignorant of the rudiments of the faith; he sends them home to get better instruction from their parish priests. Nowhere in the kingdom, says the Monk of St. Gall, were clerks better trained than in the royal chapel; the fear of their master was upon them. They never knew beforehand which of them would be called upon to read the lessons; at the proper moment in the service Charles would point with his staff to someone; he must begin at once and read on until the King, by clearing his throat, gave the signal to stop; and woe to the reader who mispronounced or could not find his place.

We must not exaggerate the importance of this Renaissance, or the abilities of the men by whom it was initiated. The scholars of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries drew upon the purest sources, ascended through their classical studies to the first principles of literary art and philosophic thought, and were original even in their plagiarisms. In the eighth century the intellectual horizon was bounded by the Latin fathers and the tradition of the Church—to interpret and to codify the established theology was the highest ambition of the student. Any approach to rationalism, any independent exer-

cise of the intellect, was the signal for a storm of contumely and persecution. We have seen the fate of Bishop Felix, whose error was at worst a venial one, touching only the highest metaphysics of the faith. But for royal protection his fate would have been shared by Dungal, a brilliant Irish scholar who came to Court after the retirement of Alcuin. The mysticism which Dungal inherited from the teachers of his own country, his dialectical powers, his unusual erudition, were traits which at once excited the hostility of his more sober predecessors. "A wild man of the woods, a plaguey litigious fellow, who thinks he knows everything, and especially the things of which he knows nothing." Such is the verdict of Theodulf. Alcuin accuses Dungal not obscurely of Alexandrian gnosticism and is lavish in warnings to all and sundry of his pupils. By such attacks the influence of the Irishman was neutralised, and the results, such as they were, of Celtic thought snatched from the Frankish Church.

These are the defects of the Carolingian intellectual movement. Its merits can only be appreciated when we compare the meagre chronicle of Frédégaire with the annals of Lauresheim and the writings of Eginhard, or the Latin of Marculf with that of Alcuin and of Hincmar; when we turn from the copious treatises and disputations of the ninth-century theologians to mark the blank silence and stagnation of the preceding epoch; or when we run over the list of monasteries planted by the authors of the movement in Saxony and Western Germany

—veritable dykes to stem the tide of paganism and ignorance which otherwise must infallibly have swept back upon the newly conquered lands in the chaos of the following century. For all these results the great King must take the principal credit. It was he who collected the teachers and set them to work, who furnished them with resources, who pointed out to them the direction in which their efforts would be most profitably expended.



CLASSICAL SEAL USED BY CHARLES.
(*Montfaucon.*)

CHAPTER VIII

THE IMPERIAL CORONATION

800 A.D.

EGINHARD assures us that the coronation of A.D. 800 came as a shock to the person most concerned. "He was at first disinclined to take the Imperial title and used to protest that he would never have entered the church upon that day, though it was a high festival, if he had known the Pope's intention."

The naked truth is not expected from kings or their biographers. Their denials deny nothing, their frank confessions inspire a not unnatural scepticism. Charles was, for a king, veracious; Eginhard, for a courtier, honest. Yet we may be pardoned for scrutinising their assertions in the light of recorded events. Had the idea of empire never crossed the mind of Charles? Did he become an unwilling actor in a *coup de théâtre* planned by Leo alone? Or was he merely desirous of waiting a more convenient season before he should take a step so audacious? These questions cannot be answered with absolute certainty. We must be content to relate the facts and point out their probable significance.

There is nothing to show that the coronation had been definitely discussed, either at Rome or Aachen, until within a very short time of its actual occurrence. Although the conquests of Charles left him the master of wider territories than Constantine and Irene, although their shameful treaties with Baghdad and the Bulgarians and their attitude in the Council of Nicæa had sorely tarnished the prestige of the Eastern Empire, although the Franks spoke angrily of Byzantine arrogance, still the reverence for hereditary right was strong in the West. At Rome, as we have seen, Pope Hadrian, and doubtless other politicians of less exalted station, shrewdly conjectured whither the destiny of the Patrician would lead him, and vaguely looked for the coming of his *missi* to repeat the question which Pepin had put to Zacharias, whether it was not meet that where might was, there should the right be also. But Charles was too much immersed in German affairs to ask what Rome was saying; and Rome, which since the year 781 had formally severed her connexion with the Eastern Empire, was in no haste to take another master. Neither Hadrian nor Leo were men to be troubled by the thought that all their power came to them by delegation from the Emperor whom they flouted. So long as the corpus of the estate was safe, the title-deeds mattered nothing; at the worst there was the marvellous myth of Constantine and Sylvester ready at hand when required to justify the new independence of the Papacy. Finally, there was among thinking men at large a keenly felt regret for the Empire as it had been under the

first Cæsars, and, more especially in Italian hearts, a longing to see the true, the ancient Rome once more the centre of the world. These sentiments were inarticulate and no statesman had, as yet, attempted to turn them to account. Had Leo III. been a favourite in his own capital, or even a nonentity of unblemished character, Charles might never have been emperor. Municipal disputes and obscure scandals produced, or at least precipitated, an event which has profoundly modified the history of Europe.

Leo was by birth a Roman, employed from his earliest years in the Papal household, and possessed of a considerable reputation for political astuteness. It was probably this last qualification, rather than the extraordinary virtues and popularity attributed to him by his biographer, which caused the Roman clergy and people to elect him on the very day of Hadrian's burial (December 26, 795). A statesman was needed to assert the independence of the Duchy and the Holy See against their too powerful Patrician. Charles, when informed of the election, was not without misgivings for the future of the Church. He may have regarded Leo as a more dangerous opponent than Hadrian; he certainly doubted whether the new Pope was suitable on moral grounds. His official letter of congratulations is complimentary in tone; the death of Hadrian shall not disturb the alliance of the Franks with the Holy See; let Leo, like a second Moses, hold up his hands to God for victory, while Charles and the chosen people smite the Amalekites hip and thigh.

On the other hand, certain private advice, to be conveyed by the mouth of Anghilbert, the arch-chaplain, is singularly pointed. Any Pope might be greeted with a general exhortation to well-doing; but Leo is warned against simony, contempt of the canons, and looseness of life. The King was not accustomed to moralise gratuitously. Guarded though his language is, we can detect an undercurrent of sinister forebodings and suspicions. We may be sure that Hadrian never, even at the time of his greatest differences with his pupil, was considered a suitable subject for such innuendoes and reminders.

Among the Roman clergy Leo had bitter enemies; their leaders, Paschalis, the Prior of the Notaries, and Campolus, the Paymaster, were of his own household. The former certainly, the latter probably, was a nephew of Pope Hadrian. The Curia included others of the same family and moved by a like spirit of disappointed ambition. It is the first instance of a "Papal family" playing a great part in the politics of Rome. The one hope of the party lay in the election of a Pope attached to them by all the ties of interest. With this end in view, they were prepared to drive Leo from his seat by any means which might be necessary. The character of the Pope suggested an attack upon his private morals. They circulated charges of adultery and forgery, which must have been gross exaggerations, but seemed sufficiently probable to excite new uneasiness at Aachen. At the request of Alcuin, who in his turn was probably inspired by Charles, Arno of Salzburg took the opportunity of a visit to

SPECIMEN OF CAROLINGIAN ART. A PROPHET WRITING.

FROM A IXTH CENTURY MS. IN THE BURGUNDIAN LIBRARY, BRUSSELS.

Rome to investigate these rumours. His report, while removing the worst suspicions from the minds of his employers, was so far from being favourable to Leo that Alcuin put it in the fire as soon as he had read it.* Still Charles refrained from intervention, and Leo, either conscious of his own innocence or confident that nothing could be proved, refused to gratify his enemies by an abdication.

His position was not so sure as he imagined. Any popularity which he had once possessed in Rome was quickly undermined. The fault may have been in himself; a late authority speaks of injudicious interference in the administration of the city. However this may be, Paschalis and Campolus decided that they might with impunity resort to violence. On the 25th of April, 799, as he was riding through the streets without armed attendants and at the head of a religious procession, the bravoes of the hostile faction sprang upon him from an ambush. His friends fled in affright; the citizens made no attempt to interfere in his behalf. He was surrounded, pulled from his horse, and beaten and otherwise maltreated until he lost consciousness. Orders had been given to blind him and cut out his tongue, that he might be permanently disabled for any public station. Leo and his friends subsequently spread a story to the effect that this was actually done; among his donations to the Roman churches we find a mention of tapestry which represented the

* See Jaffé, *Monumenta Alcuin*, pp. 445, 463, 488, 511. Charles appears to have been less easily convinced than Alcuin of Leo's respectability.

miraculous healing of a blind man. The more probable account is that his tormentors, either from carelessness or compassion, failed to complete their task.* More dead than alive, their victim was taken up and carried to the monastery of St. Erasmus, on the Cœlian hill. But the conspirators had neglected to prepare their plans. They hesitated and consulted without result, and meanwhile their opportunity passed away. In a few days the wounds of the prisoner were healed. His faithful chamberlain came to the rescue and lowered him by night from an unwatched window. He escaped to St. Peter's Church, outside the walls, and took sanctuary. Two Frankish *missi*, one of them being Winighis, the Duke of Spoletum, came with a considerable force to protect him. Rome had closed its gates; they therefore carried Leo back with them to Spoletum. He was followed thither by a number of nobles and ecclesiastics from various cities of the Patrimony. The Romans stood alone in their rebellion. The Duchy and the Exarchate had no intention of submitting themselves to the guidance of a city mob. Nor were the proceedings of Paschalis and Campolus of a kind to disarm suspicion. Beyond plundering the estates of Leo, they made no use of the supremacy which they had so easily acquired. They did not even muster courage to elect an antipope.

In some perplexity the *missi* sent to Charles for

* The biography of Leo describes two assaults upon his person; the second was made by the conspirators at their leisure in the Church of St. Sylvester; they then succeeded in effecting the desired mutilation. Döllinger rightly stigmatises this as an interpolation in a narrative which is otherwise perfectly sober.

his orders. He was on the point of starting for Saxony to pacify the disturbed districts north of the Elbe. Delay was impossible, because the Saxons hourly expected assistance from the Northmen. He therefore ordered that Leo should be brought to his camp at Paderborn. This was done forthwith; an epic fragment, probably by Anghilbert, describes in detail the ceremonies with which Charles received the suppliant; we infer that the King refused to show in public any of the suspicions which he might feel in his heart of hearts. The same poem mentions a long and secret interview which followed the meeting. Conjectures are rife as to the subjects then discussed. The most intimate friends of Charles were left for some time, if not permanently, in the dark.* It is possible that Leo offered to confer the Empire as the price of his restoration. There is more difficulty in supposing that Charles would strike such a bargain. If Leo were innocent, the Patrician needed no inducement to restore him; if guilty, another Pope could easily have been found who would do all that Leo promised, and more. Probably Charles attempted a cross-examination. It appears that the Pope and envoys from his accusers were subsequently confronted before a council of the magnates. The proceeding was outrageous in the eyes of those who upheld the Papal dignity; but Charles was not one to stand upon ceremony in dealing with a suspected malefactor.

Nothing, however, was proved against the Pope.

* Alcuin complains that he has received no information (Jaffé, p. 491).

Charles admitted the existence of a presumption in his favour, and sent him back to Rome under the escort of royal *missi*. The Romans were now frightened and repentant; they opened their gates; they surrendered Paschalis and Campolus; they submitted unconditionally, and awaited with fear the sentence of their Patrician. The *missi* took up their quarters in the Lateran and proceeded to make enquiries as to the provocations alleged by the conspirators. On being examined, the latter failed to furnish any valid evidence against their enemy. Satisfied of their guilt, the *missi* despatched them under a guard to the King. It was for him to pronounce the final sentence. It was for him to decide whether Leo should be regarded as completely free from blame.

Meanwhile the King showed no eagerness to present himself at Rome. He confessed to his friends that the rehabilitation of Leo was a delicate matter, not to be hurriedly undertaken. He waited at Paderborn while his eldest son completed a campaign beyond the Elbe; he received an embassy from the Patrician of Sicily; he took under his protection the sorely harassed natives of the Balearic Isles and sent a fleet to assist them against the Saracens. On his return he passed the early winter at Aachen, listening to reports from his counts. After Christmas he visited the northern coast of Gaul to prepare forts and ships as a protection against the Northmen. His Easter was spent with Anghilbert at St. Riquier. Then he travelled southward by easy stages, pausing to offer prayers and gifts at famous shrines, un-

til he came to Alcuin's monastery at Tours. A conference with the Breton chiefs and the last illness and death of Queen Liutgarde detained him there until the end of June.

During this delay the tension of public feeling increased; the suspense told upon the nerves of those who had envisaged the problem to be solved; the contagion of panic spread with alarming rapidity. The Pope was neither wholly condemned nor wholly acquitted. To all intents and purposes he was a prisoner in his own palace. Both in Italy and north of the Alps men asked themselves with bated breath what would be the consequences if Charles should, after all, believe the conspirators and hold Leo guilty. Who could lawfully depose a Pope? And who, if the Pope were deposed, could ever again regard his office with the same unfaltering respect which it had commanded in the past? In fact, whether Leo were absolved or not, the possibility had presented itself that the oracle of God might be corrupt, the Vicar of Peter a wolf in sheep's clothing. To whom henceforth could Christian men look for guidance? Must not some other power be provided to curb and to correct that which had been proved liable to error? More and more the conviction gained ground that the new independence and irresponsibility of the Papacy must have for consequence the anarchy of the faith and the disintegration of Western Christendom.

Under ordinary circumstances the obvious solution would have been to restore the Emperor to his old position of supremacy. Though Constantine came

of an evil stock, he was still a youth. Emancipated from his mother's tutelage, he might, even now, return to the paths of orthodoxy. And if orthodox, he had the undoubted right to supervise the Western Patriarch. But the suggestion came too late. Already Constantine had fallen a victim to the ambition of his mother.*

For some time past Irene's influence had been waning. In 790 she was detected in an attempt to seduce the army from its allegiance. Constantine took heart of grace and kept her in prison for two years. But the responsibilities of government were too much for him. His mother was released in 792 and again became the chief of his ministers. Warned by her recent experience, she was vigilant to detect the slightest sign of coldness. When, in 795, Constantine divorced the Armenian princess whom she had persuaded him to marry, she resolved on a new conspiracy. Her plans were laid with deliberation, and only matured in 797. In June of that year Constantine was attacked by troops in the streets of his own capital. He attempted to fly into Asia Minor,

* The Monk of St. Gall relates that Leo did in fact appeal to Byzantium to help him, and that the Emperor Michael said: "The Pope holds his kingdom in his own right, and it is a better one than ours; let him avenge himself on his own enemies." The story is obviously incorrect in one point. Michael I. did not ascend the Imperial throne till 811. Nor can we assume that Nicephorus, the immediate successor of Irene, is intended. Irene was not deposed till 802. The story only goes to show how natural a step the intervention of the Byzantines would have seemed. They might be unpopular, but until Irene's crime, their title to Imperial supremacy was not disputed (Monk of St. Gall, I., xxviii., ed. Bouquet).

but his attendants betrayed him and carried him back to the palace. He was blinded by Irene's orders; at the time he was supposed to have been killed; a late authority informs us that he languished in a dungeon for many years. However this may be, the Imperial throne was regarded as vacant, and Irene, acclaimed by the fickle mob of the Hippodrome, became Empress in her own right. There is reason to think that her action was deeply resented by the provinces and by all right-thinking men. Theophanes repeats a story to the effect that the sun was darkened for seventeen days after the unnatural crime, and that the ships which were out at sea wandered aimlessly to and fro, unable to find their bearings. He wrote soon after the event; obviously the popular imagination had already been at work embellishing the horror of the crime.

Even greater was the impression produced in the West. News travelled very slowly, and the first intimation of the crime appears to have been received by Charles when the ambassadors of Irene appeared at Aachen, towards the end of 798. From the Court the news would filter slowly into the provinces. It would not be general property before the expulsion of Leo had taken place. It was then as though the two catastrophes had been simultaneous. The importance attached to the coincidence was immense. The Papacy and the Empire were, to all appearance, levelled in the dust; the one fatally discredited, the other annihilated.

Not for a moment could the Franks acquiesce in conferring the throne of the Cæsars on a woman and

a heresiarch. We do not know what answer Charles returned at the moment to Irene's overtures. We do, however, learn what thoughts were in the minds of his subjects. They held that the Byzantines had forfeited their ancient right of election; that the eagles of the Empire had taken flight from the shores of the Bosphorus; that these events were a portent and a token of divine wrath and approaching calamities. They were filled with despair for the future of the Church, left widowed of her ancient guides. The bonds of authority were loosened and Christendom was threatened with dissolution.

Their fears were as vague as their knowledge of the situation. They appear to have apprehended the destruction of Byzantium and the inrush of the heathen. All Europe was even now ringing with the fame of Haroun al Raschid and the magnificence of his Court at Baghdad. The internal weakness of his power could not be guessed, even by the well-informed; the knowledge of his dissensions with the Ommeiads of Spain was confined to the select few who knew the inmost secrets of diplomacy. There seemed no reason why the Caliph should not press into Europe along the valley of the Danube, join hands with the horde which had already entered by the Pillars of Hercules, and compress the western nations in a deadly embrace. Some such alarm was felt even in Asia Minor, where the true facts were better comprehended. The Patriarch of the Holy City put away all hope of protection from Constantinople, and invited Charles to the rescue of the Christians in the East. He sent his monks across the

Mediterranean to Italy with the keys of the Sepulchre and a petition that the King of the Franks would arise against the rising nations (*insurgeret contra insurgentes nationes*).* The fears of Alcuin were more abstruse; but his letters pointed in the same direction. There were, he wrote, three powers in the world: the Papal, Imperial, and Royal. Since Pope and Emperor had failed, the most potent of all Kings should take their duties on himself. To argue coldly with men in such a state of mind was useless. We, at this distance from the events and with our widely different view of the order of things, perceive that institutions like the Empire and the Papacy were too deeply rooted to be overthrown by the crimes of individuals. The Abbassids and Ommeiads had no common plan of operations; they would sooner ally themselves with the Christian than with each other. The power of both was declining; whether they came united or singly, Christendom could still repulse them. Of all this men were ignorant in the eighth century. The modern world will hardly furnish a parallel to the agitation of the year 800. To find one we must recur to the better-known crisis of the year 1000, when the expected approach of the

* So the *Northumbrian Annals* (in Pertz, xiii., 156) mention this request. The embassy brought the banner of the city with them, as though to invest Charles with the Patriciate of Jerusalem. The Christians of the Holy City were subjects of the Caliph; but they may well have doubted whether they would continue to enjoy toleration when their conqueror had established an undisputed supremacy in Asia Minor. Hitherto they had relied on the protection of Constantinople.

millennium threw all Europe into an ecstasy of consternation.

Meanwhile, at Tours, Charles conferred with the abbot of St. Martin. The advice of Alcuin did not altogether agree with the views of his friend. Like a true ecclesiastic, he desired to hush up the scandal, to make every sacrifice for the honour of the Papacy, and above all things to avoid a public trial. The Pope, he said, was a judge who could not be judged. In one point, however, the two concurred. Charles must go to Rome and must do something to restore tranquillity. He was the only person who, at this juncture, had any claim to restore the Pope; he alone could decide what more the safety of the Church required.

The ink of Liutgarde's epitaph was hardly dry before Charles convened the host at Mainz, and explained himself to the anxious magnates. There was peace throughout the kingdom; the charges against Leo demanded instant attention; he would go and hold a court of enquiry. How much more he hinted we do not know. We only gather from Alcuin's letters that the turning-point was felt to have been reached. The King could be trusted to do the best; no difficulties could be too great for him; whatever settlement he proposed would surely be successful. Alcuin at least anticipated what the settlement would be; one cannot tell whether he spoke on good assurance, or whether his opinion was merely a surmise which he shared with others.

As for Charles himself, we may fairly conjecture that his resolution had been formed. The one thing

needful at the moment was to restore confidence in the Papacy, and that would be his first concern. The one means of maintaining that confidence for the future was to restore the Empire; and although he may have seen no reason for an immediate assumption of the Imperial title, although he foreboded difficulties with the Greeks, although he had scruples as to the legitimacy of the course proposed, he was prepared, sooner or later, to take the decisive step. He travelled down the Brenner Pass and along the seacoast to Ravenna. After a short sojourn in the old palace of the Exarchs, he despatched Pepin with an army to hold the rebellious Grimvald of Beneventum in check and went on with his own retinue towards Rome. His way led him along the old military road from Ancona to Perugia and thence to Nomentum. Here Leo met him in all humility. They entered Rome together, and seven days were consumed in entertainments before the serious business of the visit began.

Charles was by this time convinced that the conspirators had no case against his host. Still, he insisted on a public trial, both to appease the public conscience and to assert his own prerogative. Before a synod, in which the Roman and Frankish clergy took the leading part while the other notables watched their doings, Paschalis and Campolus were heard for the last time. The reports of the process are meagre in the extreme. But the one question of importance would be whether the conspirators could produce the seventy-two witnesses demanded by the Canons. As, in the total shipwreck of their fortunes,

this was impossible, they were condemned and led away, each, as we are told, cursing the day when he had first seen the other's face. It is to the credit of Leo that he then interceded in their favour and persuaded his protector to substitute the milder doom of banishment. Three weeks, however, elapsed before he could be induced to go through the humiliating ceremony of purgation. He finally did so in St. Peter's basilica on December 23d. His biographer tells us that the act was spontaneous; the clergy said with one voice: "We dare not judge the Apostolic See, which is the head of all the Churches of God; for we are judged by it, and it is judged by no man." If they said this, they were merely following the opinion of Alcuin*; and the story, though treated with contempt by some critics, is not therefore inherently improbable. However this may be, Leo in reality had no choice: if the clergy feared him, he was more in fear of Charles.

Two days later a multitude of Franks and Romans thronged St. Peter's for a very different purpose. It was Christmas Day, and the Pope was saying mass. The King, with his sons, Pepin and Charles, knelt in a conspicuous group before the altar-shrine of the Apostle. The scene must have been strange and impressive. Purple curtains draped the interspaces of the columns in the central nave

* Alcuin's opinion is to be found in a letter of this same year (Jaffé, *Mon. Alcuin*, p. 379). He quotes the dictum from the Canons. He also mentions another opinion that seventy-two witnesses are needed to prove an accusation against the Pope; but even this he regards as trenching on the dignity of the Holy See.

and formed a sombre frame to the sea of upturned faces. A pale winter light, struggling through the rudely glazed windows of the clerestory, left the body of the church half in darkness. The eastern apse formed the solitary spot of brightness in the pervading gloom. The entrance to it lay through a great triumphal arch; from this depended the "Pharos" of three thousand candles, always lighted on such high festivals. Beneath the arch was the shrine of the Apostle, studded with jewels, and completely encased in plates of gold and silver. Behind the shrine and around the apse were mosaics of rainbow hues commemorating Constantine, the builder of the church, the first of Christian emperors, and the chief benefactor of the Papacy. Amid this splendour flitted to and fro the figures of Leo and his attendant priests, arrayed in their sumptuous Byzantine vestments; and the mystery of the eternal sacrifice unfolded itself to the gaze with all the stately circumstance of tinkling bells and smoking incense, sonorous chantings and muffled prayers, crossings and genuflexions, advancings, retreatings, kisses of peace. It was, and it remains, the most impressive ritual devised by pious fancy. But we may well imagine that on this Christmas morning the congregation had no eyes for the familiar ceremonies. Their gaze would rather fix itself upon the figure of the King, as he knelt with his sons before the shrine a little way apart from the crowd. They had been warned that something unusual was to happen—that he would not leave the church as he had entered it.

As the King rose from his knees at the end of mass the Pope suddenly produced a crown of gold and set it on his head. In a moment the whole church thundered with the antique formula of acclamation: "To Charles the Augustus, crowned of God, the great and pacific Emperor, long life and victory." Led by the Pope, the congregation broke into the litany called "Laudes," in which the saints were invoked on behalf of the new Emperor, his children, and his subjects. A demonstration so elaborate can hardly have been unconcerted; and Charles, it would seem, was not altogether taken by surprise; for he patiently allowed himself to be invested with the Imperial insignia. A malicious Byzantine chronicler informs us that he was also anointed with oil from his head to his heels*; but such unctions were not usual at Imperial coronations, and the other evidence shows that, as far as might be, all traditional forms were observed. At the same time the Emperor's eldest son was crowned as his father's designated successor in the Frankish kingdom.

Evidently the coronation was the work of a party. We cannot imagine that Leo would take a leap in the dark. He must have been certain of the crowd, more than half certain of the Patrician. One fairly good authority gives a plausible reason for his con-

* Theophanes (in Bouquet, *Rerum Scriptores*, v., 188). The Visigoths of Spain used the ceremony of unction. Possibly the younger Charles was anointed as Pepin and his sons had been in 754. The *Liber Pontificalis* says that both father and son were anointed. On the other hand, Lewis was not, if our authorities be correct, anointed in 813.

CROWN (SAID TO BE) OF CHARLEMAGNE.

NOW IN THE IMPERIAL TREASURY AT VIENNA.

(*From Lacroix's "Les Arts au Moyen Age."*)

fidence. The *Annales Laureshamenses*, departing from the official version of the story, say that Leo had previously taken counsel with the clergy, the Frankish magnates, and the Romans. They decided that since Charles was in possession of Rome, the mother of the Empire, and many other great Imperial cities (Milan, Ravenna, Trier, etc.) he ought to have the Imperial dignity—the more so because there was no longer an emperor at Constantinople, and the barbarians would laugh Christendom to scorn if it remained leaderless. Charles, continues the chronicler, received this decision with proper humility, and the coronation followed as its consequence.

We may, however, suppose that it followed more speedily than the King had wished. He stood alone in his cautious respect for the susceptibilities of the New Rome. Few realised so clearly as himself how insecure was the basis on which his power rested in the newly conquered provinces of his dominions. Few were in a position to know as he knew the sting which lurked in the Oriental diplomacy of his rivals. Obviously, it was to the advantage of Leo to crown the protector of the Holy See at once, and with his own hands. It touched his honour very nearly to prove that Charles, when he submitted the Vicar of Peter to an ignominious test, was already Emperor in everything but name. And how could he more effectually repair his damaged credit than by conferring upon his judge, as it were spontaneously and of his own prerogative, the highest temporal dignity of which the Christian world had knowledge? From other motives the Franks and Romans shared

the same impatience. Their ignorant fears had exaggerated the peril of the recent crisis. They desired a safeguard against its repetition. They feared that Charles, on further reflection, might reject their scheme. Thus all parties conspired to commit the King in the most public manner. To the Empire, with all its dangers and responsibilities, he was not averse. But he disliked the occasion as premature; and afterwards, if not at the time, it occurred to his mind that he ought not to be beholden to the Pope for what was, after all, the prize of his own bow and spear. Such, at least, is the hypothesis which is in itself most probable, and which most nearly reconciles the conflicting authorities. From these difficult questions we turn with relief to surer ground, and proceed to consider the influence of the revived Empire upon the career of Charles and the future destinies of Europe.

NOTE.—Amongst the more recent monographs on the coronation of 800, the following may be profitably consulted: W. Sickel, in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österr Geschichte*, vol. xx.; W. Ohr, *La Leggendaria elezione di Carlomagno* (Rome, 1903), and *Die Kaiserkronung Karls des Grossen* (Tübingen, 1904); A. Kleinclausz, *L'Empire Carolingien* (Paris, 1902).

COIN OF CHARLES.
(*Prou.*)

CHAPTER IX

THE IMPERIAL IDEA AND ITS EFFECTS

BETWEEN the fall of the Carolingian and the rise of the Holy Roman Empire there intervened a period of seventy-five years (887–962), and even apart from this fact there are two important reasons for refusing to regard the one as the continuation of the other. In the first place, the deposition of Charles the Fat, the last of the Carolingian Emperors, was preceded by the treaty of Mersen; and this treaty sundered once for all that political union of Gaul with Germany which was a ruling idea of the Carolingian system. When Otto the Great caused himself to be crowned in the year 962, he ruled under that title only two of the three great fragments into which the realm of Charlemagne had fallen. Throughout the duration of the Holy Roman Empire, the kingdom of the Capets remained, to all intents and purposes, outside its influence. From the second, as from the first, Imperial system England held aloof; but this was a much more serious fact in the tenth than in the eighth century. The England of Offa was weak and divided; the England of Edgar was one of the most considerable States in Christendom.

Thus, the claim of Otto to universal sovereignty, even in the West, was more palpably a fiction than the claim of Charles. Again, there was a difference of organisation between the two Empires. Charles was an autocrat; the only aristocracy which he recognised was one of service. His vassals held their lands during his good pleasure merely, and over the inhabitants of those lands they had no sovereign rights except by special grant for their own lives. Only in matters of private law did he respect the sentiment of national independence. At the end of his reign two provinces alone, Brittany and Beneventum, were ruled by dependent hereditary princes; and these were at the very outskirts of the Empire.* The exception of the first was the rule of the second Western Empire. The latter was something lightly superimposed upon preëxisting authorities—national, feudal, municipal. Its rights over them were slender and unprofitable. Its continued existence had little import for the material well-being of society.

Behind these differences, however, a general similarity of sentiment, purpose, and destiny may be traced. Both Empires owed their strength to the craving for the visible realisation of Christian unity; both had for their original objects the reformation and disinterested control of the Papacy. Both defeated their own ends, in the first place, by accentu-

* The Slavonic tribes of the eastern border may be quoted as an apparent exception to this statement. But for most practical purposes they were no part of the Empire—merely a "sphere of influence."

ating the latent differences between the Greek and Latin Communions; in the second, by exposing themselves to the attacks of the Papacy working in conjunction with national churches and exploiting national jealousies. In both, the highest aspirations were coloured, and to some extent perverted, by the vanity or ambition of their founders.

It should, however, be observed that reproaches rightly brought against the Saxon Emperors lose nearly all their sting when applied to Charles. His Empire did not introduce new complications between the secular and spiritual powers. On the contrary, the effect of his policy before and after 800 was to define more satisfactorily the ambiguous relations which his father had created in accepting the Patriciate and conferring the Patrimony. He did not go out of his way to seek the Imperial dignity, but accepted it as a responsibility which could not be refused; he employed it, not as a stepping-stone to further aggrandisement, but to legalise power already acquired, to allay the purposeless strife of race against race within his existing dominions, to evoke the consciousness of spiritual brotherhood which afterwards proved so mighty a factor in European development. The work of Otto and his successors was needless, because that of Charles had been so thoroughly done; they merely played upon the sentiment of unity which he had saved and fostered. And it is unhistorical to blame Charles for the "Mezentian union" of Germany with Italy. The Frank was not a German in the modern sense. A Teuton in race and institution, he was

a Latin in culture. The conquests of Charles subjected Italy and Germany alike to a race which served as a middle term of connexion between them. It may be confidently asserted that these conquests provoked no mortal conflict of nationalities. The culture, the social life, the institutions of Italy, were, in great part, homogeneous with those of Gaul. So far as could then be seen, the Alps were the only barrier which prevented the two countries from becoming one.

Let us turn from general considerations to analyse more closely the Carolingian conception of the Empire, and its effect upon the later career of Charles. We shall find that, as Emperor, he entered upon new relations with Byzantium, with the Papacy, and with his own subjects. For greater clearness, we will forsake the chronological order, and deal separately with each of these three topics.

The new Augustus was regarded by himself and by his subjects as the legitimate successor of the deposed and blinded Constantine. The Empire one and indivisible, enfolding in its embrace all Christian peoples, had devolved upon him, entirely and without contraction, by the will of God and the consent of the Roman people. In popular thought the existence of two Empires, the "Roman" and the Byzantine, was soon admitted. This was not the view of the Frankish Court. The successors of Charles indignantly repudiated the suggestion that their Empire was a new creation, local or national in character. "You marvel," wrote Lewis II. to his Eastern rival, "that we are called the Emperor, not of the Franks,

but of the Romans. Know, therefore, that were we not Emperor of the Romans, neither should we be Emperor of the Franks. It is from the Romans that we have received this style and dignity."* The ceremonies of the coronation, the investiture, the homage, the acclamation, were copied, as nearly as possible, from the ancient ritual of Constantinople. Their intended effect was to bestow upon Charles the same position of œcumenical authority which the extinct line of the Iconoclasts had enjoyed.

The Byzantines, of course, represented the elevation of Charles as a puerile attempt at a schism. Their chronicler concludes his narrative with a scornful reflection: "Thus the sword passed between mother and daughter, severing in hasty wrath the beauteous daughter, the new Rome, from the wrinkled, antique, and doting Rome."† On the deposition of Irene (802) her successor, Nicephorus, assumed the title of Emperor, and, while condescending to open negotiations with the Franks, carefully ignored the new pretensions of their ruler.

The logical position for Charles was to assume that the Byzantines, by accepting the decrees of Nicæa, and tolerating the tyranny of Irene, had forfeited all claim upon the Empire. The prime duty imposed upon an Emperor by the coronation oath was to preserve intact the Catholic faith as settled by the Scriptures, the fathers, and the general councils. Their chosen rulers had not done this, and had, moreover, committed the most monstrous

* Bouquet, *Rerum Scriptores*, vii., 574. Cf. *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xviii., 344. † Constantine Manasses, in Bouquet, *Scriptores*, v., 398.

crimes. What better proof could be needed that the Byzantine people was no longer competent to choose the lords of Christendom? They must either acknowledge the supremacy of Charles or stand confessed as rebels and outcasts from the Catholic Communion.

To these extremities the Western Emperor would not proceed. He knew too well the weak points in his armour. There was no rule that the election of an emperor must take place in Constantinople; but it was certainly difficult to represent himself as the unanimous choice of Christendom, when neither the Patriarch nor the citizens of the New Rome had been consulted. Irene had taught him the impossibility of crushing their objections by force, of conquering a power so remote from his own borders. For the sake of Catholic unity, he would gladly have brought about a compromise. His first idea, if we may believe Theophanes, was to unite the East and West by a marriage with Irene. His advances, made shortly after the coronation, were defeated by the influence of the eunuch, Aetius, who wished Irene to marry his relative, Nicetas, the captain of the guards. The accession of Nicephorus changed the conditions of the problem, and Charles now offered an alliance on equal terms to his brother sovereign; as in the days of Diocletian, the Empire might remain one in idea, though ruled by several persons. His advances being met with silent disdain, he hastened to prove that he could be a dangerous enemy. The rebel provinces of Venetia and Dalmatia found in him a protector, and for some time there was war

between the two powers on the Adriatic. Charles left the command to his son, King Pepin, and the details are of small interest, as must always be the case when a land power is attacked by another which is purely maritime. But the result was that Charles carried his point. Negotiations were opened in 809; in 810, Nicephorus made definite proposals of peace, and received from Charles an offer to give Venice and Dalmatia in exchange for a formal recognition of the Western as equal with the Eastern Empire. Nicephorus fell in battle with the Bulgarians before a treaty had been signed; but Michael Rhangabé followed in his predecessor's footsteps. In 812 Byzantine envoys appeared at Aachen and addressed Charles by the coveted title of Basileus.*

Any closer union between the two powers and the churches over which they presided was out of the question. The decrees of Nicæa survived Irene's fall; in 809 Charles added to the existing differences by a positive refusal to omit from the Nicene Creed the interpolation by which the Latins had affirmed the doctrine of the Double Procession. Henceforward the two Empires existed side by side on a footing of equality. Theorists, in discussing the Empire, simply omitted all reference to the awkward truth that it was no longer one and undivided. The remoteness of Constantinople, the decline of its interest in western politics, and the infrequency of

* *Annales Laurissenses*, *s.a.* "Nam Aquisgrani, ubi ad imperatorem venerunt, scriptum facti ab eo in ecclesia suscipientes, more suo id est Græca lingua laudes ei dixerunt imperatorem eum et basileum appellantes."

intercourse between the Empires prevented the speculative difficulty from troubling the multitude.

In the eighth, as in the thirteenth century, two theories of the Papal and Imperial power contested the field. The Frankish Court roundly claimed for their master the most complete superiority. "Peter has the keys of heaven, the keys of the Church are thine; through thee the Pontiffs hold their sacred rights," says Theodulf.* Nor is Alcuin less positive: "May the ruler of the Church be rightly ruled by thee, O King; and mayest thou be ruled by the right hand of the Almighty."† The Empire was to these counsellors chiefly a check upon the Papacy. With more moderation of language, Charles adhered to this view of his position, even in questions of the faith. Scripture, the canons, and the fathers, as interpreted by himself and the bishops, were the ultimate authority for the Frankish Church. He would consult the Pope, but would reserve the right of following his own opinion. This is the attitude adopted before 800 in the *Libri Carolini*, and after that date in the less interesting controversy over the Nicene Creed.

The Felician heresy denied the doctrine of the Son's equality with the Father—a doctrine held necessary to salvation, both in East and West. The better to mark his repudiation of the heresy, Charles caused the Nicene Creed to be sung in his chapel with the addition of the words, "Filioque." This interpolation, afterwards universally accepted

* Bouquet, *Scriptores*, v., 421.

† Bouquet, *l. c.*, p. 414.

SAN RAFAEL,
MARIN COUNTY
CALIFORNIA

CHRIST IN MAJESTY.

FROM A CAROLINGIAN GOSPEL BOOK, IN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY, PARIS.

(*From Middleton's "Illuminated Manuscripts."*)

by the Latin Church, became of general use in Francia before the question of its validity had been referred to Rome. The Pope's opinion might never have been taken but for the circumstance that the Frankish monks of Jerusalem, being attacked on this score by their Greek neighbours, appealed to him and cited Charles as their authority. Leo, while approving the doctrine of the Double Procession, pronounced, without hesitation, against the principle that a creed might be altered, even to prevent an error of a deadly kind. In consequence, Charles summoned a synod at Aachen in 809 and laid before it the arguments by which his decision had been moulded. These were then approved by the synod and forwarded to Rome, where for two days the Frankish *missi* disputed with the Pope. Leo remained inflexible, and made a public profession of his own attitude by setting up in St. Peter's two tablets engraved with the uninterpolated creed, one in the Greek and the other in the Latin tongue. Charles, however, refused to submit. His theology was acknowledged, even by the Pope, to be irrefragable; it was a matter of public expediency that the creed should assert a truth so essential in the clearest language. The new form continued in use throughout the Empire, and the Pope thought it best to take no further notice of the question. It is evident, from the protocol of his interview with the *missi*, that he considered himself the final authority, and equally evident that he shrank from a trial of strength with his patron.*

Until the last century, the Lateran preserved

* The protocol is printed in Baronius, *Annales*, *s. a.*

some curious mosaics, in which Leo had caused his view of the Papal authority to be pictorially represented. Charles and Leo were seen kneeling before St. Peter; the Apostle was handing to the former the banner of Rome, to the latter the *pallium*. We have here the theory of the "two swords," spiritual and secular, each supreme in its own province.

The mosaics are of a date anterior to the Imperial coronation, and express, therefore, the relations of Pope and Patrician, rather than of Pope and Emperor. But the letters of Leo after 800 seem to hint that the position of the Pope, if changed at all by the events of that year, has been changed for the better. He says that Charles stands to the Roman See as a son to his mother; he leaves it to be inferred that filial obedience is expected from the Emperor. This assumption, unwarranted by the usage of the old Empire, may be explained on the hypothesis that Leo regarded Charles as indebted to himself for the gift of the Imperial crown, though in fact he had but acted as the representative of Christendom in general and the Roman people in particular; and we may note in confirmation that Charles did not allow his successor, Lewis, to be crowned by the Pope.

Difficult problems were raised by the interference of the two powers in English affairs. From of old, the Papacy was the supreme head of the English Church, and questions of organisation were submitted to his tribunal. After 800 Charles claimed an authority of an analogous kind over the English

kingdoms. Since they fell within the Christian commonwealth, they must be regarded as protectorates of the Empire. At the same time he shrank from acting alone without the Pope. He appears to have thought that in diplomacy the Empire could only be represented by the two Powers jointly. In 808 Eardulf of Northumbria, expelled by a faction from his kingdom, asked and obtained the assistance of the Emperor. Imperial *missi* went to Northumbria and, by their remonstrances, procured Eardulf's restoration; but with them went the legates of the Pope. We have here the outward semblance of equality; we look behind the scenes, and we find that it is only a semblance. Charles undertook to settle disputes between the sees of York and Canterbury and their respective sovereigns. He instructed Leo to summon the parties to Rome and to hear their pleadings. He afterwards complained that the Pope tried to conduct this affair without referring to him. Leo threw the blame upon his legates, and did not venture to impugn the Emperor's claim.

The Patrimony formed a subject of continual dispute. Even after 800 Leo cherished the old dream of establishing a sovereign jurisdiction within the ceded territories. Substantially the Emperor triumphed. He heard appeals, he confirmed elections to the See of Ravenna, he sent his *missi* to collect royal dues and to appoint municipal authorities—all this in spite of loud protests. Leo never ventured to raise the general question, and contented himself by complaints of isolated acts. To these Charles replied with some bluntness: "I cannot find *missi* to

please you, though I have sent many trusty men; some who are now dead were blamed by you in their lifetime, and of those who remain, not a single one pleases you." The Patrimony continued, therefore, to be merely the greatest of all episcopal immunities; its boundaries and the powers of the Pope were defined by the Emperor at his pleasure.

The duties of an Emperor to his subjects are variously defined by the contemporaries of Charles. Two great schools of opinion may be discerned. The louder and more numerous body called for new wars against the heathen and the unlimited extension of the Church's sway. Leo took this view; so did the Frankish churches, when they prayed "that God will subdue all the barbarians to our Emperor." To the old warriors, whose camp-fire gossip is preserved by the Monk of St. Gall, an Emperor was merely "the ruler of many nations"; the more numerous the nations, the more glorious the Emperor. Theodulf, echoing the opinion of courtiers and scholars, prays for the time when the Arab and the Sarmatian shall fall like the beasts of the chase beneath the spear of Charles. It is the vulgar ideal of all the ages. "For he shall reign, and unto him shall be brought the gold of Arabia."

Fortunately for Europe, Charles had more enlightened counsellors. He loved no book more than St. Augustine's *City of God*.* Therein he read that conquests in themselves are evil, and only to be justified if the condition of the conquered is improved; that the Roman Empire was more to be

* Eginhard, *Vita*, c., 24.

honoured in her small beginnings, when her sons were few and virtuous, than later, when only her vast bulk and riches saved her from the fatal consequences of selfishness and luxury. There, too, he found and pondered on the description of the perfect Emperor, who holds his power as something which God has given and will, in His good time, take away; who, not elated by flattery or the pride of preëminence, remembers that he is a mortal and looks forward to that other Empire in which he will find many equals; who uses all his power to the advancement of God's glory and worship; who thinks it a greater thing to rule his own desires than to be master of many peoples. And from Alcuin, a man steeped, like himself, in St. Augustine's teaching, he received more detailed exhortations of the same kind: that Empire is responsibility; that while a King is charged with the care of one nation, an Emperor is the maker and maintainer of that social order wherein kingdoms are but as passing accidents. "Through your prosperity," wrote Alcuin, "Christendom is preserved, the Catholic faith defended, the law of justice made known to all men." Repeatedly the old scholar warned him, bearing this in mind, to turn away from distant wars, and to think rather of regenerating the Christian Church and of making justice supreme within the lands already conquered.*

* So Paulinus: "It is meet for you, worshipful sovereign, . . . to incite philosophers to meditation on things human and divine, monks to religion, all men in general to holiness; the nobles to counsel, the judges to justice, soldiers to war, bishops to humility,

This advice the Emperor followed. In the thirteen years which followed his coronation he seldom took the field, and engaged in no serious campaign. His wars were mainly of defence; their conduct was left to his sons. The true record of his activity during this period is to be found in the Capitularies. Not a year passed without producing a series of remedial measures. Not a detail of the administration escaped the criticism of the master-mind. His old vigour had not failed him. He went up and down the Empire as before, and continued to spend his leisure in hunting and other such violent exercises. Choice, rather than the weakness of old age, produced this change in his life. In 802 he published to the world a summary of his programme for the future. His subjects were confronted with a new oath of allegiance, more stringent than that formerly in use, and the *missi*, speaking in his name, explained to the people its significance as follows: The obedience which they promise by the oath is absolute; for the object of the Emperor's rule is justice, and to resist him is to contend with God. The Emperor wills that there be justice in the dealings of man with man, and, more than this, in the very hearts of men. The oath binds all men to assist him in this double task; it is a promise that each, in his degree, will be God's servant.*

We cannot deal in detail with all the legislation

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subjects to obedience, and all men to prudence, justice, temperance, peace, and concord." *Cf.* also Alcuin's letter dissuading Charles from war with Beneventum (Bouquet, v., 618).

* Instructions of 802 to the *missi*.

of the Emperor. The general idea with which he started was often obscured by a cloud of trivial cares and anxieties. The Capitula are not a code; each ordinance is a medley of scattered suggestions, reflections, and commands. They are often no more than the fugitive thoughts of a busy man, into whose ear were poured the complaints of innumerable individuals; they tell the tale of shortcomings daily reprimanded and scandals daily exposed. The Emperor will not content himself with chastising a wrong-doer; he goes on to make the crime the occasion of a general law. The Capitula bear all the marks of haste; while composed with the most excellent intentions, they rarely touch the latent evils of which particular abuses are the symptoms. With all his fiery zeal and dogged industry, Charles usually lacked both the method and the foresight of a law-giver. His edicts rarely go below the surface of things. It may be safely asserted that not one-tenth of them were ever put into execution. The magnates debated and found them very good; the *missi* read them to the provincial assemblies; counts and people affixed their signatures in token of assent; and there the matter ended. In most cases the persons whom they were intended to restrain were exactly those by whom they had to be enforced. Class interests, custom, and the inertia of public opinion proved too strong for the would-be reformer. Still, there is always something imposing in the obvious sincerity with which he sets to work; and on some few occasions, when he has found time to consider the

broader aspects of his unique position, when the old poetical and religious conception of his duties has been reawakened in his mind, he writes with eloquence and shows the spirit of the true reformer. Slight as they are, ineffectual as they proved, the reforms thus inspired by the Imperial idea cannot be neglected if we would take the measure of Charles as a constructive statesman. Unlike his other laws, they are spontaneous, comprehensive, framed with an eye to the future, not rough-and-ready answers to an outcry against gross and obvious abuses. From them we may learn how far his notions of law rose above the level of his age.

With one exception these reforms have reference to the administration of justice. The exception is a change in the military system, which is of slight importance for our purpose. Want of funds absolutely precluded the introduction of a standing army; the nearest possible equivalent was the traditional vassal-train pledged to special service in court and camp; and this was quite inadequate. All that Charles could do to alleviate the burden of compulsory service was to substitute a territorial for a personal obligation—so many hides of land to furnish a single soldier, the holders of the hides to club together in paying and equipping their representative. The details of the system were altered from year to year; we cannot be certain that it was universally applied, or intended to be more than a temporary expedient. It was less a reform than a concession to dire necessity. Probably it did but legalise an arrangement which had long been tacitly countenanced. A

HORN AND GOBLET, SAID TO HAVE BELONGED TO CHARLES, PRESERVED AT AACHEN.
(*From Vétault's "Charlemagne."*)

momentous event in the history of institutions, it was the merest incident in the career of Charles. Putting it aside, we have left for consideration, (1) the improvement of the *missus* system, (2) the reform of the local law-courts, (3) the codification of the national laws.

All these measures have the merit of being conceived in a conservative spirit, and the corresponding defect of clumsiness. Of the past Charles had little knowledge ; the histories which he loved taught no lessons of statecraft. Nor had he, like Alexander or the makers of Rome, the genius to divine the first principles of sound administration without the assistance of examples. His limitations make themselves apparent in his first reform. He never appreciated the advantage of that rigorous division of functions, which is now acknowledged as the sole expedient by which an autocratic government can hold subordinates in check. He had found all sorts of powers, military, judicial, administrative, concentrated in the hands of the counts. He had attempted to provide against the misrule of the counts by instituting the appellate jurisdiction of the *missi*, but he had heaped on the *missi* the same disorderly aggregate of functions. Finding one set of tyrants in existence, he had brought in another of the same kind to control the first. Now, in the year 802, he learned the failure of his youthful experiment. The cry of the poor and oppressed, laying the blame of their woes upon the *missi*, came to him from every part of the Empire. His answer was not to try a new method, but to cobble at the old. He now chose men of high rank for

the office, thinking that they would be less liable to corruption. He made the circuits an annual institution, and mapped out the Empire in circuits that each commission might know its exact sphere.* Two *missi*, one a layman, one an ecclesiastic, were sent through every circuit, that the interests of Church and State might be equally protected. It was the Emperor's practice to transfer the *missi* annually from one district to another that they might be more impartial. Each year they received exact instructions as to the matters of which they should take special cognisance. A general ordinance of 811–813 defined their duties with some care. They were to go their rounds once in three months. Besides appearing, as formerly, in the ordinary county and hundred-courts they were to hold an extraordinary court in four different places on each occasion; and this must be attended by all the neighbouring counts and bishops. As before, the *missi* were to remedy all the shortcomings of the permanent officials. The better to check the counts and bishops, the duty of choosing *advocati*, hundredmen, and other such subordinate magistrates, was handed over to the new authority.

The powers of the *missus* were thus enormously increased, and with them his duties and his temptations. Always unpaid, generally holding other

* These circuits were large. In all Germany there were only four. Bavaria was one, Rhætia another. In Northern Gaul we hear of three, centring around Paris, Orleans, and Rouen respectively. Farther south the old Gallia Narbonensis formed another. Aquitaine and Lombardy, not being subject to regular visitations, do not appear to have been thus mapped out.

onerous offices, shrinking from unpopularity, and not without a fellow-feeling for the men of his own class whom he ought to control and chastise, he proved as inefficient after these reforms as he had been before. His office barely survived the reign of Lewis the Pious; for a long time previously it had served no useful purpose. Charles himself was dissatisfied. He rapidly multiplied the list of cases which the *missi* were to send direct to his own court. He left as little as possible to their discretion.

Vain, also, was the attempt to strengthen the popular element in the law-courts. Hitherto seven "rachimburgs," * chosen afresh at each assembly, had acted as judgment-finders. Owing to their irresponsibility, ignorance of the law, and fear of the count, these juries usually failed to observe either equity or consistency in their decisions. Charles replaced them by standing committees of the same number called "*scabini*." These were to be carefully selected, persons of substance and good repute, learned in the law. They held office for life or during good behaviour. But soon complaints arose that the *scabini* were no better than their predecessors. It became necessary to restore the old predominance of the count by ordaining that when the *scabini* departed from the law he should annul their sentence. The original scheme had credited the general body of freemen with a degree of intelligence and public spirit which they certainly did not possess. The

* I give the definite number on the authority of Mühlbacher, who does not, however, quote any authority.

popular law-courts could work well only while law-suits were few and social relations simple. They were an anachronism in the comparatively civilised Empire. Their decay was accelerated by the immense expansion of that Empire, which offered to able men a great official career and made the provincial courts appear a paltry, contemptible field of action. The life-blood of the province was drained to recruit the Court and the official hierarchy. Reform, to be effectual, should have been undertaken on a bolder scale, by appointing, for instance, a number of judicial officers remunerated on a fixed scale, and not according to results. Popular conservatism and an empty exchequer were, however, a fatal bar to such a project.

The reform of the law was no less superficial than that of the courts. Before the year 800 the Salic and the Bavarian codes, and perhaps the other national codes, had already been reduced to writing. The Gallo-Roman had his *Breviarium Alarici*, an abridgment of the Theodosian code, compiled originally for the Visigoths of Aquitaine (A.D. 506), and afterwards taken as the universal handbook; he had also various compilations of the common forms for conveyances, contracts, and settlements. All these texts were unofficial, defective, and full of archaisms. Like the Twelve Tables in the age of Cicero, their most frequent use must have been that of a peg on which to hang new laws. Of the Capitularies issued by Charles and his predecessors, authoritative copies were in circulation. But these ordinances dealt, for the most part, with administrative matters and church

discipline; their authors hardly dared to invade that sanctuary of custom, the private law.

It was, consequently, a step in advance when Charles, in 802, reduced to writing all the national codes, introduced such alterations as the *missi* recommended, and caused the county courts to swear that they would follow no other version than his. Subsequently he published several lists of "*capitula legibus addenda*." One applied equally to all the codes, others to those of particular nations only. But the change was slighter than it seemed. We learn that the use of the new version could not be enforced. Judges turned away from it to follow their own instincts or prejudices. To the end of the Middle Ages, the lands in which the *Breviarium* had taken root continued, as of old, to be the only "lands of written law."

The failure of the code was not entirely a disaster. The compiler had been too pedantic in his adhesion to the letter of tradition. We do not expect in the ninth century a Code Napoléon, abolishing the diversity of local customs, and reverting to the simple principles which underlie them. We do, however, look for the abolition of practices which were no less repugnant to the best minds of the period than they are to us; and in this we are disappointed. Theodulf heaps invective on the cruel anomalies of the criminal law, under which "theft might be punished by death, and a murder by a trifling fine." These anomalies were left untouched, so far as their principle was concerned. The "wergilds" of religious persons are raised in all the laws; the expediency of wergilds,

in themselves, is a question which does not trouble the Emperor.

We may say, then, of the Empire at its best and highest that it had little in common with the Respublica Romana which it professed to represent. The trappings are Roman, the substance underlying them is Teutonic. What Latin elements existed in the scheme of Charles came from the canons of the Church, or from the customary private law of Gaul. Charles may be called a Roman in so far as he grasped, more than most men before or since his time, the ethical significance and justification of the Roman system. The statecraft by which the Romans had reached their great results he was incapable of comprehending; in his methods of war, diplomacy, and government he remained to the last a true Austrasian.

The Empire, even when definitely recognised as an Empire of the West alone, carried with it obligations towards all defenceless Christians in whatever part of the world they might reside; so at least Charles conceived the situation. Already before the coronation he had taken under his patronage several communities which were in a special manner exposed to the violence of Islam. In 798 he received from Alphonso, the independent sovereign of the Asturias (791–810), a part of the spoils taken in a raid upon Lisbon; letters passed between them, and we are told that Alphonso became the man of Charles. The contract was more than a ceremonious fiction. In the year 801, when Lewis was besieging Barcelona, Alphonso led out his army and inflicted a severe defeat

upon the relieving force which El Hakem of Cordova had despatched to the north. Several circumstances prove that the Emperor was on terms of close friendship with the Christian subjects of the Emir. He borrowed from them the Athanasian Creed, also the Filioque clause of the Nicene. During the era of persecution which commenced with the reign of the Emir Hisham (787–796) numbers of Spanish Christians crossed the borders of the mark, and were planted by the Emperor's orders in agrarian colonies enjoying his special protection. They retained their own laws and customs and were exempt from all dues except that of military service.

The churches which at Carthage, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and elsewhere in the East enjoyed a precarious toleration beneath the Khalifate received more than one proof of the Emperor's affection. The Patriarch of Jerusalem sent him in 799 a number of relics, in 800 a banner and the keys of the Holy Sepulchre. Both gifts were graciously received. The latter looks like a symbolic offer of the Patriciate over Jerusalem; it was thus, with the banner of Rome and the keys of Peter's shrine, that the Roman Patriciate had been conferred on Pepin and on Charles himself. But the Emperor avoided the too literal interpretation which might be placed upon his act. He had no thought of entering upon a war with Haroun al Raschid. Some years before 800 he sent envoys to that sovereign; and in 807 did so a second time. The object in each case was to intercede for the Eastern Christians; and this pacific policy was completely successful. Haroun replied

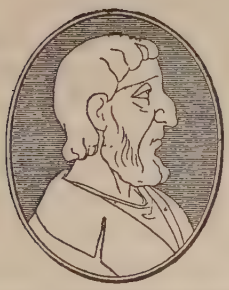
by sending his own ambassadors to Charles in 801 and 807. They brought him splendid gifts: on the first occasion an elephant which was for nine years * the chief glory of the Imperial sumpter-train; on the second a marvellous water-clock which struck the hours; there were twelve windows round it, from which at the hour twelve horsemen issued; the windows closed behind them as they came out and opened again to let them return. Eginhard tells us that a gift of much greater value, that of Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre, was conferred by Haroun at the same time as the water-clock.† The Monk of St. Gall appears to go much nearer to the truth when he makes Haroun say to the Frankish envoys: "I will give the Holy Land into his power and I will be his proxy, and let him send his *missi* to me when he thinks fit, and he will find me a faithful steward." Charles never claimed sovereign rights in Jerusalem; but he was allowed to send envoys and make donations to the Churches of Africa and the East whenever he wished. Both in Eginhard and the Capitularies we are told of his liberality to them. A traveller of the next century mentions in particular the hospital for Latin pilgrims which he founded and endowed in the Holy City.‡ It may be conjectured that Haroun intended by his courtesy to guard

* He died in 810 at Lippeheim on the way to Saxony. He was to have been used in the war against the Danes.

† Eginhard, *Vita*, c., 16. "Sacrum illum et salutarem locum, ut illius potestati adscriberetur, concessit."

‡ Bernhard, a Frankish monk, in his *Itinerarium* (*circ.* 865); Richter, *Annalen*, p. 174.

against the danger of an aggressive alliance between the Eastern and Western Empires, or hoped to plant a thorn in the side of the Ommeiads. It is certain that Charles had no such ulterior motives. He entertained a respect half chivalrous, half child-like, for the brilliant Empire of Islam which had so many points of resemblance with his own. But he looked for no personal advantages from the connexion. Therein he differs most markedly from the kings of France who, under the cover of his example, made the protectorate of the Eastern Christians the excuse for a close political alliance with the Crescent.



HEAD OF CHARLES THE GREAT.
FROM A SEAL.
(*Pertz.*)

CHAPTER X

THE EMPEROR AND HIS COURT

THE epics present Charlemagne as a Nestor among the warriors—an old man with a snowy beard whose fighting days are a memory of the past, and who, according to the bias of each poet, becomes either the master-mind directing the paladins, or the sport and plaything of their passions. The reason is not far to seek: the Emperor had grown old, he had become a man of peace before any author of note sat down to describe him. Our knowledge of his personality comes from Eginhard, who was born after he began to reign, and from the Monk of St. Gall, who was of a still younger generation. Only in the pseudo-Turpin and romances based upon that authority do we meet with echoes of earlier sagas describing Charles at the prime of life; and these are mingled with imaginary elements. Art helps us no more than literature. Although the seals of Charles give what profess to be portraits of him, they differ among themselves; in one at least we recognise the features of Jupiter Serapis, and the others may be equally valueless as evidence. Coins come to our help only after 800 A.D., and some of these are obvious copies from Byzantine models.

They present the Emperor now with a straight, now with an aquiline nose; in some he is close shaven, in others he wears the long German moustache. These last probably come nearer to the truth than the others. They agree fairly well with the bronze equestrian statuette of the Musée Carnavalet, and also with the Lateran mosaics which, as we have said above, were made by the order of Leo soon after his elevation to the Pontificate. The originals have perished, but we have several copies made by skilled artists in the eighteenth century; since they confirm in every detail the descriptions of his dress as given by the biographers, they may be assumed to give a tolerable representation of his personal appearance. They show us a hawk-nosed man, with a broad, moustachioed face, high forehead and shaven chin, tall, square-shouldered, and strongly built.* Eginhard tells us that Charles was tall above the common; his height was seven times the length of his foot. His voice was clear and weaker than one would have expected from his build. His eyes were large and keen, his general expression cheerful. A short bull-neck somewhat spoiled his appearance, and in later life he grew corpulent. But there was about him an indescribable air of dignity which caused these defects to be forgotten.

His character may, in part, be gathered from the

* Montfaucon, *Monumens*, vol. i., gives a picture from an ancient manuscript which represents the Emperor holding in his hand a model of the church at Aachen. He is bearded and wears a long cloak buttoned in front. It can hardly be a contemporary portrait, although the editor is of that opinion.

events of his public life. Like all his countrymen, he was easily moved by great ideas; unlike most of them, he was tenacious of impressions when once he had formed them, and possessed the power of concentrating all his energies upon the purpose of the moment. Possessing, in an eminent degree, the qualities of daring and promptitude, he is still more to be admired for the deliberation with which he conceived his great designs and the undaunted resolution which he manifested in executing them; for the open-mindedness with which he asked advice, for the unbiassed sagacity with which he sifted it when given. His mastery of detail was amazing; he kept himself informed of everything which happened, and what he had heard never escaped his memory. His comprehensive glance took in all the interests of his wide Empire, and saw each in its true proportions. Inventive we cannot call him; but no man of his day knew better how to make the most of existing conditions; his innovations were few, but they were well adapted to the needs of his time. His common sense protected him from an unreasoning love of novelties, and from the extravgances which defaced the career of his would-be imitator, Otto III. Charles wished to prepare for the reign of the Catholic Church and the Universal Empire, not by sweeping away national traditions, but by infusing a new spirit into the ancient forms. He would have his subjects become Latins in their love of the Church and of justice, while remaining Teutons in dress, and law, and their daily life.

Of his aversion to new-fangled fashions we have

BRONZE STATUETTE OF FRANKISH HORSEMAN, NOW IN THE MUSÉE CARNAVALET, PARIS.

The horse is of antique workmanship; the rider by a IXth century artist. The orb denotes a sovereign. Possibly we have here a portrait of Charles the Great.

more than one witness. "He would have nothing to do with foreign clothes, however fine," says Eginhard, "and never put them on, except that once at Rome, to please Pope Hadrian, and another time, at the prayer of Leo, he dressed himself in the long tunic, the overmantle, and sandals of Roman pattern." The Monk of St. Gall has preserved a vigorous tirade which the Emperor delivered on the subject of the fantastic cloaks affected by his courtiers: "What is the use of those rags? They will not cover me in bed, they will not shield me from the wind and rain when I ride." The same author describes Charles as he had seen him, dressed in the old Frankish costume, with high laced boots, cross-gartered scarlet hose, a linen tunic girt with a sword-belt, a white or blue mantle, square in shape, and so buckled on his shoulders that in front and behind it reached to his feet and at the sides barely touched his knees.

To his unwearying zeal, there are many witnesses. "No man cried out to him," says the poet, "but straightway he should have good justice." The romancers supposed that his omniscience could only be explained by supernatural agencies; they said that the brazen eagle on the palace roof veered and shifted by magic art, pointing always to the quarter where there was need of the Emperor; so that he was aware of any danger the moment it arose.* Hincmar tells us that he would never endure to be

* Another account (*Karlamagnus Saga*, c. 20) says, more prosaically: "He caused a great eagle to be set upon the hall, for a sign that France is highest in the Emperor's realm."

without two or three of his wisest counsellors, and conferred with them in all his leisure moments.* Under his pillow he kept writing materials, and whenever a useful thought occurred to him at night —for he was always a light sleeper—he would note it down for discussion the following day. Although cases belonging to the royal court of justice were, in general, left to the Counts of the Palace, he would snatch a few moments to advise them on any doubtful point of law, and even listen to the pleadings of the disputants while he was dressing himself.

As was natural for a busy man, he avoided banquets and entertainments. When he gave them at all, they were splendid and large numbers were invited; in general, however, the duty of feasting his vassals and keeping them in good humour devolved upon his ministers. Eginhard lays great stress on the simplicity of his life and habits.

"He was temperate in meat and drink, especially the latter; he had the greatest aversion to drunkenness in any man, much more in himself and his companions. From solid food he could not abstain in the same degree, and often complained that fasts were injurious to his health. At his usual dinner were served no more than four courses, not counting the game with which his hunters served him from the spit; he preferred this to any other kind of food. During dinner he listened to a recitation or reading. The readings were taken from histories and the lives of the ancients. He delighted also in the books of St. Augustine, especially in those entitled *The City of God*. He was so sparing in the use of wine

* *Opera Hincmari* (ed. Migne), i., 1084–5.

and other beverages that he rarely took more than three draughts during dinner. In summer he would take after dinner some fruit and a cup of liquor; then he would undress and pass two or three hours in sleep."

This is one side of the picture; there is another, over which Eginhard glides more lightly. Historic truth was not his only, nor perhaps his chief object; the Carolingian Court must be propitiated and the devout must be edified by his biography. Moreover, he had taken for his model the life of Augustus, by Suetonius, and, not content with imitating that author's style, was fain to display his erudition by borrowing from him whole phrases and sentences. Some critics contend that these plagiarisms vitiate the general effect of Eginhard's work. It is more natural to suppose that, without absolutely forsaking the truth, he laid an emphasis upon those traits of the first Frankish Cæsar which most recalled the founder of the Empire.* Such parallels with antiquity were very usual in the literature of the Dark Ages; we find, for example, that the Saxons are described in the very words of Tacitus by an author who had every means of studying his subject at first hand.† But the fact is that Charles was by no means

* It is to be noticed that Eginhard also borrows phrases from the other biographies of Suetonius; especially those of Vespasian, Tiberius, and Claudius. In any case, these imitations affect the truth of one section only in the biography, viz., cc. 22–27. Chapter 24 is that to be regarded with the most suspicion; but the facts there given relate merely to personal habits; and the passage combines reminiscences from widely scattered passages of Suetonius; there is nothing which suggests indiscriminate and unreflecting transcription.

† Rudolf, in the *Translatio Sancti Alexandri*, *M. H. G.*, ii., 674. He is a writer of the ninth century.

unlike Augustus. In both men we detect the same reverence for the past, the same determination to make the most of existing conditions, the same conviction that the old traditions of domestic life must, at all costs, be preserved. Like the founder of the Empire, Charles dressed in homespun; in the old Queen, Bertha, the Court of Aachen possessed a second Livia. Unfortunately, there was also more than one Julia in the case; and as Charles himself lacked the self-restraint and staid decorum of Augustus, so his family went far beyond the license of their Roman prototypes.

In the domestic life of the Frankish Court the patriarchal element was not wanting. The tastes of the Emperor were simple, and he regarded splendour as a tiresome necessity of state. But in his own life and in the lives of his chosen friends there was much of Austrasian coarseness and Neustrian profligacy. Eginhard, usually so zealous to defend the fair fame of his patron, cannot rebut this particular impeachment. Capitularies, diplomata, and the gossip reported by Notker all tell the same story. The household of Charles was notorious for the profligacy of its more prominent members; the purlieus of the palace swarmed with disreputable characters. Feasts naturally degenerated into drunken orgies; the master of the board might contemn, but dared not prohibit, the revelry of his vassals.* Rival houses ruffled and fought for precedence at every opportun-

* Zeumer, *Formulæ*, p. 323. "Our vassal Richard came before us and said that when Queen Fastrada came from Bavaria to Frankfort for the winter (possibly of 791) his grandfather was killed by

ity; we hear of a stabbing affray in the very audience chamber of the Queen. It was with infinite difficulty that Lewis the Pious extirpated the more flagrant abuses, and the praise elicited by his homage to the elementary laws of morality speaks volumes for their neglect in the lifetime of his father. We do not lay much stress on the somewhat rigid homiletics of Alcuin after his retirement. Alcuin is vexed by the taste which Anghilbert and others show for theatrical performances; he warns his friends against the allurements of the "doves" who flutter round the palace. It would have been well if all the amusements of the Court had been as innocent, or if all its habitués had merited no harsher names. Also we are prepared to wave aside the dark legend of Roland's parentage and all the rest of the unsavory scandals at which the romances hint; solar myths repeated and garbled from age to age have seldom failed to fasten on the names and to blacken the reputations of epic heroes; the tales which are told of Charlemagne were told before his day of Zeus and Periander, and have been told again of the Celtic Arthur. But, when these are rejected, authentic facts remain which are hardly less unpleasant to an admirer of Charles and his nation.

At all periods of his life Charles was susceptible to the influence of women. Sometimes the influence was innocent, sometimes it was the reverse. Now we trace in him a resemblance to the noble savages of

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mischance in her presence because he himself had killed a man," etc. Other evidence in the Capitulary of Lewis the Pious, "*De ordine palatii.*" Pertz, *Leges*, II., i., 297 *f.*

Germania whom Tacitus describes as believing "that there was something holy and prophetic in the souls of womenkind," and manifesting their belief in chivalrous reverence; at other times we cannot fail to remember Dagobert I. with his more than Oriental harem. Charles was a dutiful son, an almost uxorious husband, a too indulgent father. The ladies of the royal household followed him in all his travels, and whether he kept Christmas in the camp at Pavia or among the marches and forests of Saxony, they were still to be found at his side. His queens were ministers of State, whose word often had more weight with him than that of their male colleagues. In a less degree his daughters too were factors in the game of Court intrigue. Ambitious men of mediocre abilities found their patronage very useful. The Emperor had a keen eye for merit when some post of high responsibility was in question; but in filling minor offices he allowed himself to be less cautious. The favourite of a princess might reasonably expect a bishopric to come his way. Notker tells a story which on this head is more instructive than many chronicles. He is a vague and garrulous narrator; but he had seen the Emperor and had talked with men who knew the seamy side of palace life.

There was a poor young man in the school of the palace whom Charles promoted to a place in his chapel. One day, in the young man's hearing, it was told to the Emperor how a certain bishop had died; and the Emperor asked whether the dead man out of all his wealth had sent anything before him (*i. e.*, in the

way of alms). The *missus* answered: "Sire, no more than two pounds of silver." The young man could not contain himself, and burst out in the King's hearing with the exclamation: "Truly a slight provision for so long a journey." The prudent Charles considered a little and said: "If thou dost receive the bishopric wilt thou lay out a greater store for that same journey?" The youth caught at the words as if they were grapes falling into his mouth, and said: "Sire, this rests in the will of God and in thy power." Then the Emperor told him to hide behind the curtain at his back and to listen what helpers he would have in his suit. Meanwhile the courtiers, hearing that a bishop was dead, laid themselves out to catch the prize through the help of the Emperor's familiar friends. But the Emperor held his ground and denied them all, saying that he would not be false to that youth. At length Queen Hildegarde sent the chief men of the realm, and afterwards came herself to the King, to ask the bishopric for one of her clerks. And when he took her petition jokingly, and said that he could refuse her nothing, but would not deceive his candidate, then, as women will when they wish to persuade a man, she dropped her voice to a plaintive tone and tried to win over the steadfast soul of the Emperor with caresses, saying to him; "O my Lord and King, what will it hurt that boy to lose his bishopric? O my dearest Lord, my glory and my refuge, prithee give it to that faithful servant whom you wot of." Then the young man who had been told to stand behind the curtain clutched the Emperor

through the folds and broke out in a lamentable voice: "Keep your courage up, your Majesty! let no one take from your hands the power which God has given you." Then that brave lover of the truth called him forth and said: "Take that bishopric and look to it that thou sendest before thee and me a good provision for that journey from which there is no returning." *

Some ladies of the royal household used their power well. Of Liutgarde and Hildegarde, we hear nothing but good; but in Fastrada and the daughters of the Emperor, the system produced the worst results. Fastrada brought to Court the rancorous feuds and savage hatreds of her homeland; her husband indulged her thirst for vengeance, and paid dearly for doing so. Charles would not allow the princesses to marry. Policy may have had something to do with this. Matches were arranged for them with friendly royal houses, and broken off when the friendships cooled. There were good reasons why Rotrude should not wed the Emperor Constantine, nor her sisters the sons of King Offa. And their father may well have feared the consequences of marrying them at home. A powerful magnate, when allied in this way to the reigning dynasty, might easily, in course of time, found a second Mayoralty. But Eginhard suggests that the Emperor was so much attached to his children that he could not bear to part with them. Whatever the motive, he kept them at Court and, as though to make them amends, allowed their most unblushing

* Monk of St. Gall, Book i., chapter iv.

intrigues to pass without reproof. When Lewis the Pious began the reformation of the Court, his first step was to send his sisters packing to a nunnery. Two of them had already taken the veil, and Rotrude, at least, had won the heart of Alcuin by her devotion to theology. But we do not learn that Lewis recognised any distinctions; all were equally guilty in his sight.

In fact, Charles could ill afford to take the tone of a censor. His own conduct was by no means free from reproach. That, after divorcing Desiderata, he married in rapid succession three wives, Hildegarde, Fastrada, and Liutgarde, merely proves him a man of somewhat coarse fibre and callous sensibilities. But both between and during these unions he contracted several "marriages of the second rank," as they are euphemistically termed by his clerical admirers. Several of these belong to the last period of his life, when he was over sixty years of age.* The Church kept silence during his lifetime; so faithful a defender could not be refused some trifling indulgence. When he was dead the pious took their long-deferred revenge and castigated his memory at their will. The Emperor in purgatory became the subject of a legend which obtained wide circulation.

The most serious attachment of his life was to Hildegarde, by whom he had his only lawful sons. His sorrow for her death finds utterance where we

* Eginhard mentions, among his concubines, Gersuinda, Regina, Adelinda. He had children by all of these in his old age. There was also Himiltrude, the mother of Pepin le Bossu, and another, whose name is not given, by whom he had a daughter.

should least expect it, in a formal deed of gift. Bequeathing to St. Arnulf of Metz an estate for the good of her soul, he forbids the abbot and his successors, as they shall answer for it at the bar of God, to turn their trust to any other uses: "for we know how charity waxes cold and duties sedulously performed of old, fall afterwards into oblivion." To the end of time, the laws comprised in the grant shall serve to furnish candles for the sepulchre of his "most beloved wife" and if anything remain over, it shall be spent in masses and prayers for the health of her soul. Finally, he entreats his successors and posterity to respect his wishes. The deed is dated "on the day of the Lord's ascension, on the vigil of which our sweet wife passed away." * It must be added, however, that in a few months from this date the Emperor was happy in a new marriage with a woman infinitely the inferior of Hildegarde in beauty and in character.

This is human enough; it is not heroic. Nor is it a hero whose passages of wit are recorded by Notker. The humour of the Emperor was not above the standard of the age. His coarse and pithy sayings exactly hit the taste of the Franks; there was not a vassal at Court so unpolished that he could not appreciate a practical joke at the expense of some fat bishop. There is nearly always a bishop in these stories. The cœnobitic biographer has a grudge against these enemies of his order, and will wander

* Bouquet, *Rerum Scriptores*, v., 748. The Church of St. Arnulf was, like that of St. Denis, a favourite burying-place of the Carolingians.

any distance from his subject to raise a laugh against them. But we need not, therefore, neglect his stories altogether; Charles, too, had a poor opinion of bishops. He never comes so near to eloquence as when he is rating them in a general synod. These philippics, we know, had little effect upon the subjects of them. But, if Notker may be believed, Charles was amply revenged upon their stolid self-complacency.

"Having related how Charles, in his wisdom, exalted the humble, let us also show how he humbled the proud. There was a vainglorious bishop, who was overfond of vanities. Perceiving this, Charles took a Jewish merchant, who often travelled to the Promised Land, bringing back to this side of the sea many strange and costly wares, and he told him to play this bishop a trick. The Jew caught a mouse and painted it with colours and offered it for sale to the aforesaid bishop, saying: 'This valuable creature comes from Judæa and has never been seen before.' The Bishop offered three pounds of silver for so rare an animal. The Jew replied, 'A pretty price, indeed! I had rather throw it into the deep sea than let any man have it so cheaply.' The bishop, who had great possessions and never gave anything to the poor, made an offer of ten pounds. Then the roguish Jew pretended indignation; he said, 'O God of Abraham, let me not lose my labour and cost of carriage.' At length the bishop paid down a bushel of silver and got the mouse. The Jew told the Emperor, who then called his bishops together, showed them the silver, and said, 'See what one of you has paid a Jew for a painted mouse.'"

The story goes on to say that he improved the

occasion with a discourse on apostolic poverty, and that the luckless purchaser of the mouse was covered with confusion.

When the morals and humour of the Emperor were so primitive it is not surprising that he adhered to the nomadic life affected by the Merovingians and his own ancestors. The royal residences were scattered far and wide over his dominions. We find four of them in Aquitaine, namely, in Cassineuil, Theoduad, Audiac, and Ebreuil; two in Bavaria, at Ingolstadt and Regensburg; others in Italy at Milan, Pavia, Parma, Verona; and very many in the valleys of the Meuse, the Rhine, and the Main, as for example, Thionville, Kiersi, Herstal, Attigni, Frankfort, Worms, Mainz, Ingolheim, and Aachen. All appear to be visited at some period of the reign. A very usual custom was to spend Christmas in one "vill," and Easter in another. The whole Court moved with the Emperor; his library, his treasures, and his archives followed him from place to place; even the Palatine School was not allowed to be stationary. To some extent this restlessness was politic. The ruler of rude and restless peoples did well to show his state in every part of the realm. Much more, however, was Charles influenced by the motives of his barbarian ancestors. His household depended for maintenance upon the produce of his vast estates; it was a part of good husbandry to distribute the burden equitably between them. The more distant and rarely visited "vills" sent annually long processions of provision carts to those which the Emperor honoured by his presence.

Except in Italy the palaces were nothing more than country-houses on a magnificent scale. Those which Charles preferred stood upon the verge of some royal forest, such as the Ardennes, or the southern Böhmerwald, where he could pursue to his heart's content the royal sport of hunting. Aachen, which he took for his capital, owed this favour to the warm medicinal springs in which it abounds rather than to the advantages of its position. Standing off the great highways of war and commerce in one of the wildest parts of the kingdom, it could not under any circumstances become a great centre of population ; and although Charles and his courtiers loved to call it "the new Rome," we cannot suppose that they expected to found an important city. The palace, the senate-house, and the church attached to the palace formed the nucleus of Aachen. The entire population was engaged in ministering to the wants of the palace.

The buildings at Aachen were no doubt begun as early as 784; for in that year Charles fetched from the palace of the Exarchs at Ravenna the marble columns, the pavements, and the mosaics which were used to adorn the church. But even the church was still unfinished in 799.* The art of architecture had long been forgotten north of the Alps, and the Franks were slow learners. The builders took for their model the church of San Vitale at Ravenna—an octagonal structure surrounded by a cloister and

* The building is described as still in progress in the epic fragment "*Concerning the interview of Charles and Leo*," in Bouquet v. 388*f*.

capped by a dome, plain and massive, round arches, and little ornament. The design is perpetuated in the present cathedral at Aachen; but the original church was burned by the Northmen in the tenth century. To complete the work many relics of antiquity were destroyed, particularly the Roman walls of Verdun; the Franks lacked skill or patience to hew their own building-stone. The colossal equestrian statue which adorned the square before the church came from Ravenna and was a monument of Theodoric the Ostrogoth. The only ornaments which the church owed to native workmanship were the chancel-screen, the candelabra, and the doors, all of solid bronze.

The palace followed the traditional lines of a Frankish "vill," though stone and marble took the place of wood; the salient features—the quadrangle, the portico, the upper chamber where the master of the house gave audience and from whose windows he surveyed the scene below—take us back to the days of Clovis. It had two remarkable adjuncts: a great swimming-bath where one might sometimes see the Emperor disporting himself with more than a hundred of his warriors*; and a park well stocked with trees and game which recalled that of the Merovingians at Paris.

Of the other "vills," Ingolheim approached most

* Eginhard, *Vita*, c. 22; also the *Karlamagnus Saga*, c. 12. "It is told that there was there a very pleasant grassy valley, and there he had a bath made so that it might be at one's pleasure either cold or hot, and round it a marble wall. He bade the smiths work well and said their wages would be all the better." The latter reference I owe to the kindness of Professor W. P. Ker.

CATHEDRAL AT AACHEN, SHOWING RESTORATION OF THE DOME OF CHARLES.

nearly to Aachen in magnificence. We are assured that its portico had a hundred columns and the windows were counted by the thousand. The mosaics which adorned the interior were its crowning glory. In them were depicted, probably by Italian artists, all the stories of famous men and nations: the wars of Ninus and Cyrus, the conquests of Alexander, Hannibal defeated by the Romans; Romulus founding the Old Rome and Constantine the New; Charles Martel hewing down the Arabs on the field of Tours; Pepin triumphant beneath the walls of Pavia, and, last of all, Charles sitting in state upon the Imperial throne. Hard by the palace was a church resplendent with marble, metal-work, and gilding; and here again were mosaics dealing in like manner with the subjects of sacred history.* Of their style we may form some idea from the illuminations in the Bible of Charles the Bald.

The Emperor delighted in architecture and engineering; perhaps the comparative simpleness of their ideas and the enduring nature of their productions account for his taste. At Mainz he built for the convenience of the army a wooden bridge upon stone piers. Unfortunately some days before his death a blazing ship was driven against it by the current and the whole superstructure disappeared in a few hours. Besides the palaces on which he spent so much labour and treasure, he engaged in many works of a more useful character. We hear of military bridges built of boats on the Weser, the Elbe, and the Danube. A series of carefully en-

* This description is taken from Ermoldus Nigellus, c. iv.

trenched strongholds defended the north-eastern frontier against the Dane and Slav. Others, as we have seen, were made from time to time in various parts of Saxony. It may be wondered that the Emperor stopped here, when he might have perpetuated his renown by works of this kind in every part of his dominions. Vast armies of workmen were at his disposal when required. All Europe, we are told, was set to work at the bridge of Mainz; every count in the Empire sent the best masons and carpenters of his province. Precise details with regard to the Bavarian canal are wanting; but a great multitude was employed long enough to dig a considerable channel two miles in length. With such resources Charles might have repaired the Roman roads, of which he constantly availed himself in his marches. It is true that he actually made new highways or mended the old in Saxony; but others were needed in Thuringia, Suabia, and Bavaria. In districts of doubtful fidelity walled towns such as those of the Lombards would have been a great advantage to him. More harbours were needed for the fleets which he got together on the northern littoral; merely to restore that of Boulogne was insufficient. If we ask why these things were not done, the answer is not that Charles was insensible to their advantages. Rather, we think, it was because he could not afford the expense of hiring workmen. Money was at all times hard to find; very little came into the royal exchequer from any source. The annual gifts of the royal vassals, the poll-tax paid by the free, the profits of the royal estates, the amerce-

ments of the law-courts, were usually paid in kind —in horses, weapons, armour, cattle, in chattels of every description, in anything rather than specie. And it must be remembered that for the greater part of the reign Pepin took the revenues of Italy, and Lewis those of Aquitaine. We are expressly told of Aquitaine that its revenues barely sufficed with careful management to maintain the Court of Lewis in fitting state; and Aquitaine was by no means the poorest province of the Empire. It would have been possible to exact unpaid labour. Indeed, some such expedient appears to have been adopted in a few cases. Every man was bound in addition to military service to render help in the building of roads and bridges. Of this obligation Charles, as it seems, availed himself in carrying out the work at Mainz. But the customary interpretation limited each man's duty to the roads and bridges of his own county. The action of the King in this case was high-handed and excited bitter complaints. Generally speaking, he left such works to each Count individually; they were then done badly or not at all.

The Monk of St. Gall accuses the Emperor's master-builders of gross corruption and injustice. At Mainz he says, the director of the works sold exemptions to all who would buy; those who would not were saddled with double tasks and treated worse than Pharaoh's slaves. The incident is a small one. It shows, however, the fatal flaw in the government of Charles. He had few agents upon whose honesty he could rely. Where he could not

give his constant and personal supervision everything went wrong. A list of about thirty names would include all the men who achieved distinction in his reign by their administrative ability. If we analyse the list we soon discover that in most cases this distinction was achieved by warlike exploits. The men of peace are very few. Double or treble the number would not have sufficed to fill the more important offices in the palaces and the provinces. The bulk of these offices were filled with incapables; the better sort of officials were overwhelmed by the weight of their responsibilities.

Charles realised the evil. He exhausted his energies in the attempt to do the work of many men. One is apt to forget the extreme simplicity of his system; for there existed in his Court all the apparatus of a complex central administration. He had his "apocrisiarius" and arch-chaplain to manage all business relating to the Church; they were supposed to control the royal patronage, to decide unimportant matters without referring to their master.* He had also his Counts of the Palace who occupied an equally important position in secular business; there was one for each nation of the Empire; a suitor or petitioner was directed to approach the Count of his own nation, so that only the most difficult questions might filter through to the Emperor's audience-chamber. He had his household officers, the treasurer, the constable, the marshal, who reported to the

* These two offices were frequently, perhaps usually, combined in the same person. Thus in 794 Anghilbert is called the arch-chaplain, but Hildebold, Archbishop of Köln, was apocrisiarius at the time.

Queen and were controlled by her. He had, finally, his chancery in which the manufacture of writs and charters proceeded according to set forms, and for which the chancellor was entirely responsible.* We find, however, that in practice these high officials are treated as merest clerks and secretaries. The Emperor—perhaps with good reason—refused to give them a free hand; he waved them aside, heard everything, and decided everything. We are reminded of Louis XIV., of Napoleon, and of many another great autocrat. It is an old story, the passion for detail, the distrust of all subordinates, preying upon a masterful mind.

The general *placita* play an important part in the scheme of Frankish government. They are aristocratic in their constitution; for the host at the Mayfield does not deliberate; that is a privilege or rather a duty which is left to the chiefs. We are apt indeed to suppose that even an aristocratic gathering would constitute an important check upon the sovereign; that in the magnates the general body of freemen were roughly but fairly represented; and that since two separate sessions were held in most years, and no important measures were taken without the assent of the magnates, the government of Charles was thus rendered as popular, as democratic, as government can be in a half-civilised age. But this view will not bear ex-

* These details are given by Hincmar, *De Ordine Palatii*. He is a writer of the ninth century, but copies from Adalhard's work on the subject. Adalhard was one of the Emperor's most trusted councillors.

amination. The government of Charles was popular in spite of, not because of, the assemblies. The magnates who enjoyed a seat and a vote in them, were all officials of the Empire—bishops, abbots, counts, dukes, margraves ; and the laymen held their offices during the good pleasure of the sovereign. Their interests by no means impelled them to protect the commonalty ; still less would they risk their status and emoluments in the interests of that body. In fact, they come into conflict with the Emperor because he represents the people and they do not. It is he who clamours against tyranny and oppression ; they are the guilty persons whom he accuses. And even in their own private quarrel they are incapable of checking their master. If he insists on a measure it is passed. Of underhand resistance, of wilful neglect to execute the laws when made, there is naturally a good deal ; of open protest, of opposition in debate, little or nothing. Nor does this assembly take the initiative in legislation. Sometimes it is invited to suggest reforms, and it suggests them ; the Emperor then considers what he will do in the matter. More often he proposes to them a list of ordinances, and leaves them to debate. If they ask for explanations or suggest amendments he returns to argue with them. We get the impression that this was of comparatively rare occurrence. As a rule the Emperor is the moving spirit and has the last word.

Legislation is not the sole purpose for which he holds these assemblies. At those of the autumn the *missi* present their formal reports to him ; at both

he looks to receive any information which may be useful to him. On the basis of the news received he will make his laws and settle his policy. The government of Charles was not a tyranny. Upon the will of his vassals and of the national militia all his power depended. The nominal sovereignty of the people is explicitly recognised. They are not usually asked for their assent to laws. Still there is a theory that their presence and confirmation are needed. The autumn council, we are told, merely prepared resolutions which acquired the force of law when confirmed by the magnates in the midst of the host at the Mayfield. This is not always the case; it was in the autumn of 802 that Charles and the magnates codified the national laws; and we can hardly suppose that all freemen were present at that time of year. We learn, however, even from this instance, that any change in the customary law required the assent of the people, if not at the Mayfield, then at least in their several county courts. Capitularies which touched lightly on the private relations of life might come into force as the arbitrary injunctions of the Emperor; very important changes in the administration might be effected by a private instruction from Charles to a *missus*. Archbishop Hincmar gives a description of the Mayfield which is valuable as proving how completely personal was the Emperor's government. He built for the magnates halls of meeting, and set them to debate upon subjects proposed by himself. Sometimes he divided the assembly in two, a lay and a spiritual, which were united only when matters of common

concern came in question. Meanwhile he walked about among the warriors of the host, dressed like any Frank of noble birth, and distinguished from others only by the gold-headed staff which he carried in his hand. He received in person the annual gifts of his vassals, and ingratiated himself by every means with these and all other men. He jested with the young and was sympathetic with the old. He singled out for special notice those whom he rarely saw. And all the while his ears were open to hear every whisper which threw light on the currents of popular feeling; and he asked all with whom he talked, about the state of their country—whether there were rebellions, and if so what was the cause, and what the enemies of the Empire were doing on the frontier. All men might see him and press close to him; everyone of mark could exchange a word or two with him. The picture is perhaps a little overdrawn. But it gives us the whole secret of the Emperor's power. He was an autocrat who conciliated his people and studied their wishes, of whom they felt that he was a man of like sympathies and prejudices with themselves, a man who would apply pressure to them for their own good and not otherwise. The Capitularies, which they did not help to make, were still an answer to their petitions and complaints. That beneath all his courtesy he was stern and proud merely added to their good opinion of him. The warriors who had bought the Empire with their blood loved to feel the iron hand of a master. Of soft-heartedness there was little enough in their own composition; they despised a monkish

THE PALADINS ROLAND AND OLIVER.

BAS-RELIEFS OF XIITH CENTURY, IN THE CATHEDRAL AT VERONA.

(*From Maffei's "Verona Illustrata."*)

meekness. The man who had proved greater in battle than Charles Martel, wiser in council than Pepin the Short, did well to bear himself haughtily. He owed it to his own achievements; he owed it to the conquering nation which he led and represented.

COIN OF CHARLES.
ON A ROMAN MODEL.

CHAPTER XI

800–814 A.D.

WITH the approach of old age Charles showed an increasing inclination to restrict the sphere of his activities. The government of Aquitaine he left, as before, to Lewis. In Italy, Pepin enjoyed the same freedom; when he died, in 810, the peninsula was, for a time, administered by Imperial commissioners; finally, in 812, the youthful Bernhard was permitted to succeed his father. The Emperor showed himself in neither kingdom, although at intervals he sent his *missi*, issued an admonition to the royal vassals and local magistrates, or changed the regulations of military service. Among the Capitularies we find a letter addressed by him to Pepin, from which we infer that the viceroys were constantly advised, encouraged, or reproved. Also we are sometimes told in the preambles to Italian laws that they are issued at his command. If our sources for the history of Aquitaine were more complete we should probably find the same thing happening there. It is understood that the subjects of Pepin and Lewis are also the subjects of the Emperor, and that administrative orders for the whole realm of the Franks may, at

need, be issued at Aachen. But it does not appear that the Capitularies, to which the Emperor devoted so much time and thought, were intended to run throughout the Empire, unless it was expressly stated that they should do so. To this rule there are exceptions: in particular, the revised codes of the national laws and the additions made to them from time to time were binding everywhere. These, however, received the assent of an unusually comprehensive assembly, in which were included the magnates of all the nations in the Empire. Ordinary Capitularies were promulgated in assemblies comprising only the men of those provinces which were immediately governed by the Emperor. Autocrat as he was, Charles would not seem to override the old maxim that laws are always made by those who have to obey them. And it was easy for him, when he conceived some more general reform to be advisable, to procure the adoption of it in the *placita* of the dependent kingdoms.

Next to legislation, the problems of the German frontier claimed his chief attention. Even here he was usually content to act through a lieutenant. To place his eldest son on a footing of equality with Pepin and Lewis, he had, in 790, invested him with the title of King of Western Neustria, and ten years later had caused him to be crowned by the Pope at Rome. But in Neustria there was little scope for an active warrior such as Charles the Young proved himself to be. On this side, the Bretons were the only enemies, and Wido, the Warden of the Marches, was fully equal to the duty of holding them in check

Charles was, therefore, usually to be found in his father's kingdom. He was destined to succeed him, if not in the Empire itself, at least in the hegemony of the Frankish dominions; and it was only fitting that he should serve a rigorous apprenticeship. His tastes were military, and we are told that his household resembled nothing so much as a camp. In the border-wars of Germany he found the occupation best suited to his tastes, although it must be owned that he conducted these operations with much more energy than skill.

Except to hunt, the Emperor seldom wandered far from Aachen. In 803 we find him at Regensburg, engaged in settling the Bavarian frontier. In 804 he led the host into Wigmod and Transalbingia, but returned without fighting any battles. In 810 he pitched his camp at Verden, expecting a descent of the Northmen upon the Saxon Marches; but the murder of the Danish King Godefrid and the pacific disposition of Godefrid's successor, Hemming, soon left him free to return. In 811 he inspected his fleets at Boulogne and Ghent. These are the only important occasions on which he left the Rhineland. The death of Charles the Young in 811 did not rouse his father to reassume the duty of leading the host. On the contrary, he made haste to end the wars which were still in progress. Conscious that his own time was short, he wished to leave his successor perfectly unhampered.

But his desire for peace was more than a sudden impulse. He gloried in the title of "Pacific," which he had assumed at the same time as the Imperial

crown. He felt that his dominions were already too extensive. The annals tell us of many wars during the last thirteen years of the reign. But the object is not further conquest; the acquisitions of new territory are insignificant and incidental. It was to secure the peace of the frontier that Lewis waged his wars in Spain, that Pepin ravaged Beneventum, that Charles descended upon Bohemia. They were directed to surround the Empire with a ring of tributary nations, or, if this were impossible, to secure a line of strong natural positions where camps and fortified posts could be established. Substantially, this result had been achieved by the year 810; and the time had then come for friendly relations with all neighbouring powers. Accordingly, negotiations are opened with the Eastern Empire, with El Hakem, of Cordova, and with Hemming, King of the Danes. By 812 they had all been brought to a prosperous conclusion, and, as the final step, a treaty was arranged with Beneventum.

From one point of view, these treaties are a confession of weakness. In every case the Emperor contents himself with something less than he had desired. To Beneventum and the Eastern Empire he made considerable concessions. The Saracens were far less anxious than himself for a settlement. The complaisance of the Danes was due merely to the civil wars by which their power was for the moment enfeebled. Both these enemies had good cause to know the weakness which underlay the fair exterior of the Frankish power. United, the forces of Charles could laugh them to scorn; but the chances

that they would be united in time to meet any given attack were of the slightest. The Western Empire had become too unwieldy for an aggressive policy; it was scarcely better fitted to defend what it already possessed. No prophet was needed to foresee that it must fall to pieces as soon as it passed into the hands of mediocre statesmen. The humiliations which it experienced in these thirteen years, though veiled by some brilliant triumphs, were ominous of future calamity. They bore witness to imperfect centralisation, to the inefficiency of local government, to a faulty system of tactics and strategy, to the exhaustion of the warlike races which had won the victories of the past. When the vultures begin to settle it is a sign that the death agonies have begun.

The political history of these years deals then with attempts to conceal and to stave off the inevitable dissolution of a polity which had outgrown its strength. The process of decay and its causes do not lie upon the surface. Deep-seated causes are silently at work, and they become apparent only when their work is nearly done. The nascent Empire emerged triumphantly from long and exhausting struggles. The same Empire, in its period of full development, quivers at the slightest impact from outside, nor is there anything in the events narrated by the chroniclers to explain the swift transition from youth to decrepitude. Compared with the Saxons and the Avars, the Danes were not a numerous people; the Saracens beneath El Hakem were measurably weaker than they had been in the

days of Abderrahman. The danger lay in the new mode of warfare which these enemies employed. Their command of the sea and their guerrilla tactics enabled them to despise the weight of numbers. If we ask the reason why the Franks, so long preëminent in the military art, failed either to meet the pirates with their own weapons or to pursue them back into their lairs, we shall find it in the disordered state of their society, which left them little leisure to reflect on the experience of the past and to lay more skilful plans for the future. If we press the enquiry a stage further we perceive that this paralysing anarchy is the direct outcome of incapacity and selfishness in the ruling caste. The Count and the Bishop were the source and fountainhead of all the evil. Mutual jealousies—the eternal conflict of the State and Church in its most degraded and degrading form—accounted for much of this; narrow minds and exclusively personal ambitions for the rest. Trained for a life of war and doomed by their own successes to one of comparative quietude, the Frankish magnates lost the qualities which had made them the rulers of Europe and became unfitted for their high position in the very moment of attaining it.

It is the Emperor himself who gives this diagnosis of the degeneration which he saw around him. His Capitularies, after the year 800, are often melancholy reading; they are full of diatribes against the highest officials. Charles complains that these persons spend their time in thwarting one another; the bishop spies on the count and the count refuses

justice to the bishop. It is even worse when they act in unison, for then we may be sure that a conspiracy is on foot against the estates and liberty of their defenceless inferiors. The Emperor finds that year by year the free landholders, who had been the backbone of his army, are diminishing in numbers; he enquires the reason and he learns that some have commended themselves to the counts and others have sold their lands to the churches; they were obliged to do so if they would escape oppression. Of those who remain, some make interest with the count to buy or beg exemptions from military service; others, less wise in their generation, are harried and amerced until they have no longer the wherewithal to find themselves in arms and rations. Turning to the Church, he finds that the monks are idle vagabonds, the priests illiterate and dissolute. They do not preach, they do not teach. Again he asks, why is this permitted? It is because the bishops have more pressing business of their own to follow up. More general complaints abound. Commerce and agriculture are unprotected from the bandit and blackmailer; thieves and sturdy beggars multiply without a check. There is no law-court to be trusted; the judges are drunkards when they are not dishonest. Corruption is everywhere; to eradicate it impossible. As a last resort the Emperor encourages the formation of feudal groups, tightens the hold of the lay lord upon his vassal and multiplies ecclesiastical immunities. When the few are made responsible for the many, surely, he thinks, there will be less difficulty in making the law obeyed.

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▨ *Shaded portion indicates Breton March.*
▨ *Forest of Broceliande.*

Brittany and the Breton March (circ. 800)

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The experiment has often been attempted and never with success. In such cases the State is ruined by the allies whose assistance it invites. The official heads of the nation become in their official capacity impotent. The vassal and the church-tenant no longer look for orders to the Emperor; they will obey only when their lord gives the word. So the wheel comes full circle, and the Carolingian sinks to the same position of empty titular superiority as his defeated Merovingian rival. Soon he will be but one among many chiefs, his effective force merely that of the war-band, the vassals, whom he has gathered round him. Last of all will come the time when this war-band no longer overawes the others, when its members will fall away and aspire like other nobles to independence.

Changes of this kind are not wrought in a few years. So long as the founder of the Empire lived the disintegration and recrystallisation of society proceeded very slowly. But they have begun under his very eyes and they continue in spite of his most strenuous efforts to the contrary. Individual offenders are punished and those who have escaped detection become more cautious for a time. But the Emperor cannot watch everyone, nor can he punish everything that comes to his knowledge.

The institution of vassalage had already played a mighty part in the making of history. The House of St. Arnulf rose to power on the shoulders of their vassals. Such stability as their government at the first possessed was due to the discrimination with which they used these vassals in the administration of State

and Church. Every count, every duke, every *missus*, was pledged to be their faithful man. He held his post, like a benefice of lands, during his good behaviour. Other vassals of less consequence were quartered on the crown-demesnes through the length and breadth of the Empire. In theory they were all the creatures of the royal favour. In fact they tended to become a dangerously independent class. When the central authority is weak, possession is nine points of the law; the owner is nothing, the usufructuary is everything; the overlord cannot enforce the conditions upon which he leased his estate, unless the tenant is actually within his reach. So it became the practice that the office of the count and the lands of the simple vassal should descend as of right to his son; the fear of offending the old aristocracy and the difficulty of finding capable new men left the sovereign no choice but to tolerate the fatal doctrine of heredity. At each remove the great families became more thoroughly identified with the provinces over which they ruled. They used official rights to bring the provincials into their own vassal-train and, confident in the strength thus acquired, ignored their official duties. At the beginning of the ninth century the Carolingian county is already on the high road to become the mediæval fief. The count in virtue of his office has the high, the low, and the middle justice; when, no longer content with the third penny, which is his rightful due, he insolently usurps the whole profit of amercement; when, instead of the royal law, he administers that which local custom and his own good pleasure have framed; when the

missus no longer appears to revise his sentences and to remove the "royal pleas" to a higher court, then the transformation will be complete; instead of royal we shall have seignorial justice. And it needed only the reign of one weak Emperor for all these steps to be taken and for the central power to be reduced to a shadow.

The one power which was able permanently to hold its ground against the self-aggrandising policy of the counts, was that of the national Church. We see her, after the death of Charles the Great, holding the balance of power between the Crown and the aristocracy. At the centre of the realm she makes and unmakes emperors. In the provinces she saves her immunities from the grasp of the count: nay, more, she actually extends their limits. But this process was equally fatal to the Crown. Royal jurisdiction over immunities had been exercised through the counts and *missi*. When the *missi* cease to make their rounds, and the bishops to present their criminals in the court of the count, then the Crown ceases to be a factor in the daily life of the bishops' tenants. Church fiefs and lay fiefs grow together; soon all that they render to the State will be an uncertain quota of military service, with still more uncertain aids and dues.

Decentralisation was of course accelerated by that intense national and local feeling which we had occasion to notice in earlier chapters. From its first origin to its fall the Carolingian State was a federation of races, governed in great measure by their own countrymen under their own laws, habitually en-

grossed in the pursuit of their own parochial interests, and rarely aroused to a sense of fellowship in a larger community except when the tumult of some great peril, or the fascination exercised by some vista of conquest brought them to serve harmoniously under the banner of one trusted general. When the obvious dangers were removed, when no more worlds remained to conquer, when the burden of military service was incurred merely to defend one's neighbours against sporadic depredations, the disposition to seek a more enduring union immediately disappeared.

National jealousies were intensified as the force which had so long controlled them dwindled away. In the ninth century the minds of men were cut to a pattern of such narrowness that the higher advantages to be secured by universal peace and unity of government passed their comprehension. The Empire of Justice and Religion which had been the life-dream of Charles and Alcuin was to their subordinates and successors a dream without a meaning. When Theodulf pictured the Empire as based on conquest and invigorated by perpetual crusades, he was propounding a coarse ideal, but the only one adapted to the times.

For a concrete illustration of the general tendencies at work within the Empire let us take a passing glance at the woes of one single province, as recorded by the sufferers themselves. Istria, which about the year 789 had been wrested from the Byzantines, was, as a mark of the Empire lying face to face with the Greeks of Dalmatia and the Slavonic

mountaineers of Carniola, committed to the charge of a duke enjoying unusual powers and privileges. Remote alike from Aachen and Pavia, peopled by poor and simple country-folk, the province fell an easy prey to the rapacity of this official. At length after many years of silent misery the Istrians made known their woes to the Emperor. He sent his *missi* to hold an enquiry. They empanelled a jury of inquest whose very words have by a fortunate accident come down to us; and this is the story told by the jury: Through the oppression of the Duke Johannes they have all come to poverty. If the Emperor will help them they may be saved; if he will not, it were better for them to die than live. Johannes parcels out the people as serfs to his sons, to his daughters, and to his son-in-law. The poor people are forced to labour at building palaces for him and his aforesaid kin. He has seized great tracts of land which belonged to them and has brought in Slavs from across the border to till them. "They plough *our* fields, they reap *our* crops, they pasture their kine upon *our* grass, and from *our* lands they pay rent to the Duke." Johannes and his kin take cattle and horses from the Istrians without payment, and "if we say anything they say that they will kill us." The jurors have been forced to dig for him, to prune his vines, to feed his hounds, to burn his lime —all of which are monstrous exactions such as they never suffered in the days of Greek rule. Moreover, he makes them voyage on his business not only up the rivers, but even across the sea to Venice, to Dalmatia, and to distant Ravenna. He has taken away

their woods and common-lands. When he marches on the Emperor's service he must have their horses to carry the baggage and their sons to lead the horses. When he has made them go with him thirty miles and more he will take from each man all that he has; so they return on foot naked and empty-handed, and their horses are sent into Frankland or given to the vassals of Duke Johannes. He said once to the people: "Let us collect presents for the Emperor as we did in the days of the Greeks, and one of you shall come with me to offer them." Then the Istrians with great good will, as they aver, made a collection. But the Duke, when setting out to the Emperor, turned on them and said: "You cannot come with me; I myself will intercede for you with the Emperor." Off he went and won with their gifts great honour for himself and his sons at court, and the deponents were left in great oppression and sorrow. They are nowhere safe from wrong; they dare not even fish in the public meres as they used to do of old, for the men of Duke Johannes come and beat them with clubs and tear their nets to pieces.

So they ramble on, and Johannes is forced to allow the substantial truth of these very miscellaneous accusations. One rejoices to learn that the *missi* brought him to reason. He had to disgorge his spoils and abate his unheard-of claims; securities were taken for the good behaviour of himself, his daughters, and his son-in-law. Yet, one fears that it went hardly with the Istrians after the departure of the *missi*. To accuse one's local superior was

distinctly dangerous, and in the long run the provincials found their own interests better served by a discreet silence. Of this timidity Charles complains in the Capitularies, because it casts a doubt upon his own ability to protect the sufferers; but we do not learn that confidence was restored by his exhortations. The counts and dukes not infrequently played upon the provincial patriotism of their subjects. What, they asked, had these foreign *missi* to do with the private quarrels of neighbours and kinsmen? Better to wait until they were gone and settle everything in a friendly fashion. For these reasons we are left to infer the plight of many provinces from a single instance. The Istrians were no worse off than their neighbours. Duke Johannes appears to have been no unfavourable specimen of the Frankish magnate. In the wars of Italy he had so distinguished himself as to win special praise from Charles. And we may imagine how, when rulers of this type abounded, the provincials lost all regard for the central government and gave thought to nothing but the propitiation of their petty tyrant. It was better, they reasoned, to share the profits of iniquity than to be its victim. If they became vassals of Duke Johannes might not horses, lands, rights of common, and other perquisites come their way, even as in the good old times? Such were the allurements of feudalism to the weak-minded.

A clear proof of increasing particularism is to be found in the new and violent distaste for military service. Time was when this service had been rendered cheerfully, and the stout warriors of the Em-

peror clamoured that he should find them enemies worthy of their steel.* The private instructions which Charles addressed to the *missi* in his later years unfold a very different tale. He warns them repeatedly of shifts and evasions with which they will be met, and against which they must be firm. The men of Aquitaine and Italy will protest that service in Germany is no part of their duty; that they are the men of Pepin and Lewis, rather than of the Emperor. Others will point to those of their fellows who have obtained exemption and ask why they should not have a like privilege. The *missi* will find that the great vassals leave their tenants at home; the lesser folk either pay the count to find substitutes for them (in which case the count appropriates the money), or else affirm that they will stay behind and take their chance of being condemned to pay the fine for default of service ("heriban"). Some even sell themselves into slavery, that they may live in ignominious peace. Those who come are inadequately equipped and desert at the earliest opportunity. It was in vain that Charles defined their obligations more precisely and exacted the "heriban" with all rigour; in vain that he privately advised the *missi* to be content if they could raise one soldier from every three, four, or five "mansi" of land. Year by year the host grew more discontented and less efficient. Between the lines of the official narrative we read of expeditions abandoned

* See an amusing story in The Monk of St. Gall, II., xx. A boastful veteran complains that "the Emperor and I" have to fight with such "tadpoles" as the Wiltzes and Bohemians.

when only just begun, of checks inflicted by puny foes; we suspect that the Emperor's pacific disposition arises from a wholesome distrust of his soldiers. Already the time is at hand when men will rejoice at the fall of the Empire which they had expected to bring about a golden age, just because the collapse will free them from this unwelcome burden.*

It is disappointing to find that the means by which Charles sought to secure the duration of his Empire, far from being adequate to these deep-seated maladies, are purely mechanical. He strengthened the outworks and left the inner structure to moulder unregarded. Even the revised system of education was allowed to languish after the death of Alcuin. Religious reforms continued, indeed, but they were of comparatively slight moment. The school of Boniface died out, and their place was filled by inferior men upon whom the Emperor failed to impress his ideals. The galvanic shock which had, for a time, revivified the Frankish Church was passing away. Old abuses reappeared, new ones sprang up. The Emperor complains bitterly and can devise no remedies. The one cheering ray of light which was still to be discerned came from the realm of Lewis the Pious, where Benedict, of Aniane, continued to train monks under his new Rule and to send them forth in detachments as the founders of new and the leaven of older religious houses. This was a local revival, carried on with encouragement from Charles and his Court, but depending for its success upon the facili-

* Bouquet, *Rerum Scriptores*, vii, 302. Quoted by Guizot.

ties afforded by Lewis and the nobles of Aquitaine. The Benedictines of the new order diffused themselves for the most part through the provinces south and west of the Loire; some of their settlements are to be found in the valley of the Rhone; one only (that of Marmünster, in Alsace) in the Germanic lands of the Empire. And, as Guizot well remarks, the Rule of Aniane, when compared with that of St. Benedict, upon which it was modelled, proves most convincingly the growth of formalism and the decline of spiritual fervour within the ranks of the regular profession.

It is true that in the east, in Germany the Church, during the Imperial epoch, expanded her boundaries and introduced a better organisation. The see of Salzburg was raised at the prayer of Charles to metropolitan rank and the other Bavarian bishoprics were placed beneath its jurisdiction (798); at Seben on the southern frontier of the province a new bishopric was founded; the Czechs, the Avars and the Slavs, both those within the Ostmark and those bordering upon it, were converted in great numbers by the missionaries of St. Arno, the first Bavarian archbishop. In Saxony were planted the sees of Bremen, Minden, Verden, Munster, Paderborn, possibly also those of Hildesheim and Halberstadt. East of the Rhine sprang up a profusion of new religious houses; the names of thirty are preserved, the actual number was probably far greater. By Charles and his nobles both the new and the old foundations were endowed with broad lands and wide immunities. In the cartulary of Fulda alone we find mention of 248 donations

made in the course of the Emperor's reign. The neighbouring house of Hersfeld possessed at this time estates in 195 places; the lands which Charles conferred upon it exceeded 40,000 acres in extent. With such wealth and local influence at command the German Church might well feel prepared to meet and crush any recrudescence of paganism. The chains of Christianity were riveted for ever upon the German nation.

But the power thus acquired was essentially mundane. It was a doubtful advantage to the Church. To the laity it was fraught with evil consequences. The ecclesiastical policy of Charles and his successors indefinitely retarded the growth of that national feeling to which their secular policy had given birth. While the one created a State the other set the Church upon the road to becoming a State within the State. To Charles the archbishops of Köln, Trier and Mainz, owed their vast provinces, and consequently their predominance in the councils of the Empire. Before his time the jurisdiction of Mainz was both precarious and limited in extent, while those of Köln and Trier date altogether from the year 794. For the ecclesiastical principalities which were comprised in those provinces he must also take the responsibility; since he created those of Saxony and aggrandised those of Hesse, Franconia, Alemannia. Except Otto the Great there is no German ruler whose services to the material power of the National Church can compare for a moment with those of Charles. Even Otto yields the palm to his predecessor. Otto merely added Denmark and the province

of Magdeburg to the great hierarchical system which he found already in existence at his accession; he merely enlarged the estates and amplified the immunities which the Carolingians had founded. One may add that he followed reluctantly in the path which they had chosen spontaneously for themselves. It was with reluctance and misgiving, after long delay and as a last resource, that he took the Church for the partner of his authority both on the frontiers and at the heart of the Empire. Charles had rooted the clerical aristocracy so firmly to the soil that for his successors there was no third alternative between absolute complaisance and absolute ruin. It is true that a century of feeble government was needed to develop the dangers of the Carolingian system. In the lifetime of Charles the abbots and bishops still lacked sovereign jurisdiction over their tenants; but when once the first immunities had been granted, sovereign jurisdiction was the inevitable though distant result. And then the Church would be found implacably hostile to any régime in which her own pre-eminence was not assured.

While Charles lived he kept the Church in hand. Her councils were his councils, and his word was their law. The bishops and abbots were always his nominees and often his own kindred. All over the Empire the great churchmen counted as his most faithful vassals. Time was to show and the son of Charles was to learn by sharp experience how little those minor precautions would avail when the iron hand of their inventor was relaxed in death. The rebellious sons of Lewis the Pious found no allies

more zealous than Wala and Adalhard, both of high rank in the German Church, both the cousins and trusted ministers of the first Emperor. In vain did Charles watch with jealous care the encroachments of the Church in the field of justice; in vain did he confer upon the *missi* the important power of choosing the *advocati* through whom the bishops exercised their powers of jurisdiction; in vain did he limit the right of sanctuary, and impose the strictest conditions upon the growing practice of commendation to the saints. Such purely defensive policies are rarely successful and this was no exception to the rule.

The danger arising from the hierarchy was nothing new. At the beginning of the eighth century it had confronted Frankish statesmen in an aggravated form. In the days of Charles Martel the Frankish Church had been what that of Germany was to be in the future—a dangerous foe, a doubtful friend, a leech sucking the life-blood of the society on which it hung. At the cost of much odium the mighty Mayor reclaimed to the service of the State wide lands inconsiderately bestowed upon the Church. In a more conciliatory spirit Pepin the Short and Charles the Great had continued the same policy westward of the Rhine. It was inconsistent, one might almost say inexcusable, in the Emperor to repeat in another quarter the mistake of the Merovingians. Granting that the Church assisted the consolidation of the Empire and that she developed the resources of a virgin soil which but for her might have remained a waste, the price was too high and the dangers were too patent.

On the other hand, it must be remembered that the Church owed almost as much to private as to royal liberality. That Charles should found bishoprics and abbacies in the lands which he had conquered for the Church was inevitable; having done so, he could not, even if he wished it, prevent the fears and the hopes of his subjects from heaping gifts upon these corporations. In his private capacity and from no motives of state he gave lands and privileges to many churches; it was thus that he returned thanks for a victory, guarded against defeat, averted the divine wrath from his kingdom, or interceded for the souls of his dead wives and children; he could not well forbid his followers to do the like. The Church grew through the operation of forces, which no ruler nor dynasty could hope to suppress. Her opponents were mortal, she was immortal; their interest in the struggle was prospective and hard to bear in mind while hers was obvious and immediate. Her motives commanded general sympathy, theirs savoured of impiety. They could not fail to reverence her, and she had no reverence at all for them.

Thus in the Frankish Empire at the zenith of its fame we already see the signs of eclipse and fall. Therefore, when one lingers to describe however shortly the last wars of its founder, and to trace however roughly the final boundaries which it attained, one may fear to be accused of needless prolixity. To those, however, who have realised that medieval Europe is little more than the wreckage of the Carolingian Empire, and have discovered how many strands of history run back to this starting

point, such a survey must needs be of interest. Let us therefore see the furthest points to which this Empire extended, and the precautions by which they were secured.

We will begin with Brittany. It plays a small part in the history of the time, but it has literary associations which make it perennially interesting. We cannot afford to ignore the school in which Roland learned the art of war, the last foothold of the continental Celt, the cradle of Celtic poetry and romance. We cannot forget that to the policy of Charles and the rude forays of his wardens was due that community of interests and sympathies which made of the discordant septs of Cornouaille and Dol, Leon and Domnonée, a united nationality; or that to this nationality medieval France was indebted for a Bertrand du Guesclin and medieval Europe for the most attractive elements in her literature.

The Bretons,* originally subdued by Dagobert the Good, had vindicated their independence in 695. For this good fortune they had to thank the Merovingians rather than themselves. Never was Brittany so much divided as then. Of all the four provinces Cornouaille alone preserved the semblance of unity. Even here the true unit of society was the "plou" or sept, the only recognised authority that of the "machtiern," the chief of the "plou." The bulk of the tribesmen were serfs tied to the soil, who paid the chief for their holdings in labour or in kind. But the chief, absolute as he seemed, had

* For the facts of Breton history anterior to the reign of Charles, La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, Vols. I and II.

little real power. To administer justice was his prime, almost his only function; when sitting in the law-court he was advised and controlled by his kinsmen and the tribal aristocracy. It is surprising that such a political system could withstand the slightest assault. Yet the Bretons were no contemptible opponents. Pepin the Short could not reduce them though he took their fortress at Vannes and taught them to respect the Frankish borders (752). Charles himself had no easy task to complete the conquest. In his reign the three Counts of Vannes, Rennes, and Nantes kept, under the Warden of the Marches, a vigilant watch upon the unfriendly tribes. In 786 the seneschal Audulf marched into the country, stormed many strongholds protected by marsh and forest, and led away many distinguished chieftains to do homage at his master's feet. In 799 Wido was equally successful; in 800 the Breton aristocracy came together at Tours and offered their allegiance to the King in person. Once again, in 811 there was war in the country round St. Malo. The rebels, though they boasted themselves the finest horsemen in the world, recoiled before the heavy squadrons of their masters. Their army was routed, their villages were sacked, and their monasteries burnt. After that there was abundance of sullen discontent but no tribe dared to raise a finger against the Emperor. The men of the border submitted to the jurisdiction of the Imperial counts, and Broceliande, the dark, mysterious forest celebrated in so many myths and legends, lost all its terrors for the Frankish wayfarer. Lewis the Pious carried on his father's work. But with

ANTIQUE BAS-RELIEF OF SARCOPHAGUS, SAID TO BE THAT OF CHARLES, AT AACHEN.

(*From Dahn's "Urgeschichte," etc.*)

his usual indiscretion he entrusted the administration of the peninsula to one Nomenoe, a native chief. Nomenoe on the death of his patron assumed the royal title with the consent of the Bretons; in the third generation his dynasty came to an end, but the idea of unity survived and later on gave birth to the proud and independent Duchy which for five centuries was to hold its own against Norman and Angevin and Capet. Already in the first decade of the eighth century the best elements of the Breton character existed in the germ. Their Christianity was in the main derived from those of their Welsh kinsmen who had fled across the Channel to escape the Teutonic invader. It was less aggressive, less ecstatic, and less learned than that of the Irish monks who colonised Iona and wandered to the sources of the Rhine. Yet in St. Samson and St. Teilo, St. Gildas and St. Magloire, the sympathetic reader of their legends may discern the same attractive type of character as that which is depicted in the autobiography of St. Patrick or the history of Venerable Bede. In Brittany as in Ireland the Church was undisciplined; the tribal monastery and the wandering preacher were everything. The Celtic monks cared little for the realisation of political unity. Yet in Brittany they did much in other ways to advance the cause of civilisation. The orchards which they planted for a league round Dol were still to be seen in the twelfth century. Others of their settlements were in the forests; here in the intervals of meditation they cleared away the brushwood, ploughed the virgin soil, and sowed the cornfields from which they

fed their converts in the days of famine. Thus their teaching went beyond the creed and the paternoster; the virtues of thrift and industry, and the arts through which alone a life of peace is possible, followed in their wake. Nor was theirs the only civilising influence. The tribal communities with all their feuds and narrowness of sympathies were the cradles of valour, loyalty, and many of the social virtues. Poetry already flourished in these wild surroundings. Talking birds, prophetic trees, elusive elves, all the tales of natural magic which delight us in the fragments of Celtic literature, were themes well known to the earliest Breton minstrels. In an atmosphere of dim tradition and unconscious yearnings for national unity the legend of Arthur was taking shape as the rallying point of a new patriotism.

From Brittany we turn to its neighbour Aquitaine and to the Spanish frontier. Though Lewis the Pious was no warrior and his Court seemed, so the Frankish nobles said, like nothing so much as a monastery, still he had learned from his father to regard the Saracen as his natural enemy and the Ebro as the proper boundary of his kingdom. In Duke William of Toulouse he possessed for a time a general capable of pursuing a vigorous frontier policy. From 800 to 806 King and Duke pressed hard upon the Saracen. The unbelievers had shot their last bolt in 793: animated for a moment by the fiery Emir Hischam they devastated Septimania and dashed themselves against the gates of Narbonne. But Hischam died in 796 and his successors could act only on the defensive. The border towns of

Islam wavered in their allegiance; the Franks added force to persuasion. Lerida surrendered in 800, Barcelona in 801 after a siege of seven months and a desparate attempt on the part of Emir El Hakem to relieve the garrison. During the next five years Duke William consolidated in a Spanish March not merely this acquisition, but also Cerdagne and Ampurias, Gerona and Ausona, Urgel and Besalu, Navarre and Pampelona. This done, he retired to end his days in the monastery which, inspired by the example of his friend St. Benedict, he had founded at Gellona (806). No man of equal ability could be found to succeed him and the further advance of the frontier was checked, except that in 811 Tortosa fell to the arms of Lewis. Immediately afterwards a truce was concluded with El Hakem, and it continued unbroken till the Emperor's death. During the next reign the March was broken up; the largest fragment became the marquisate of Barcelona; out of the remainder were formed upwards of a dozen counties. Of these a western group was welded into the Christian kingdom of Navarre by Sancho the Great (970-1035), another somewhat later into that of Aragon (1035). The north-east lands of the March—Barcelona, Ampurias, Urgel, Narbonne—were peopled by a mixed race and therefore long remained in an ambiguous attitude, now leaning to the side of Spain, now to that of France. In this vacillation we may trace the influence of those colonies of Spanish Christians with which they were planted by Charles the Great.

The frontier wars of Italy had less momentous

consequences for the future. Until his death in 810 Pepin was almost continuously at strife with the Byzantines and their dependents, with Beneventum, and with the Moorish pirates. But these wars were defensive and resulted in no acquisition of territory. Venice and Dalmatia, which in 805 had placed themselves under the protection of his father, soon repented of this step and returned to their old allegiance. Somewhat later a Frankish fleet crossed over to Dalmatia only to retreat before that of the Greeks; meanwhile the Frankish army in vain blockaded the Venetians for six months within their lagoons (809). At the peace of 812 the Empire renounced all claims upon these provinces and Venice was left to pursue her policy of neutrality between the West and East, until at the end of the tenth century she absorbed Dalmatia and started upon her career of eastward expansion.

That the Franks should have failed on this side was natural. Backward at the best of times in the art of naval warfare, they were hampered in all operations on the Adriatic by the need of maintaining a large fleet at Genoa and Pisa for the defence of the western littoral. Even the admirals of this fleet were content with desultory operations. On more than one occasion the Moors were expelled from Sardinia and Corsica; in 808 Burchard the constable of the Imperial palace slew 3000 and destroyed or captured 13 ships. But no attempt was made to retaliate by attacks upon the Spanish harbours, and the Moors returned again and again to plunder. Though the peace with Emir El Hakem in 812 produced a

temporary lull, Sardinia and Corsica remained for the whole of the Carolingian period at the mercy of such assailants.

It is more surprising that the operations against Beneventum proved ineffectual. Grimvald, whom Charles in 786 had taken as a hostage for the good behaviour of his father Areghis, was in 788 allowed to return that he might succeed his father, but he proved by no means grateful. He promised on his accession that he would stamp his coinage with the name and date his charters by the years of Charles, would force his subjects to shave their beards and renounce the national dress, and would pay an annual tribute of 7000 soldi. The first two conditions he observed intermittently, the others not at all; within a few years his thoughts turned like those of Areghis towards war with the Frank. No doubt he looked to Constantinople for help; the envoys of Constantine had promised that Adalghis should come with a fleet to attack Treviso and Ravenna. At all events Charles was sufficiently alarmed to send in 792 the united forces of Italy and Aquitaine against his contumacious vassal. In 800 the war broke out again and raged continuously until the death of Grimvald in 807. He was, the national chronicler remarks, a martial prince and of a high courage. Certainly in these campaigns he showed a prudence and ability which contrasted most favourably with the impetuous and ill-regulated operations of Pepin. Trusting to his walled towns and mountain fastnesses he lured the Franks to spend their energy in sieges and forced marches, and

yet, when occasion offered, he knew how to strike a decisive blow. His opponents, after reducing three of his cities (Theate in 801, Ortona and Luceria in 802), found themselves no nearer to conquest than before: in 803 these successes were more than counterbalanced by the defeat and capture of a Frankish general Winighis, the dependent Duke of Spoletum. After the death of Pepin his father retired from an undertaking which had plainly become hopeless. Peace was concluded in the year 812. Under the terms arranged Grimvald III. retained the lands of the duchy in their ancient extent, promising in return to make good the arrears and to continue the annual payment of tribute. But this promise was never fulfilled and in the stormy reign of Lewis the Pious the breach of faith passed unpunished. The subsequent history of Beneventum, though inglorious, was eventful. She oscillated between the Eastern and Western Empires, using the one as a check upon the other, and paying very little respect to either. Beneventum in fact endeavoured to imitate the policy of Venice, but she was not equally successful: she had neither the strong natural position nor the inherent vitality of her model. Exposed on three sides to the attacks of enemies more powerful than herself, she steadily declined. The first downward step was taken in 840 when Capua and Salerno broke away to form independent principalities. On a smaller scale the process of fission was often repeated; younger branches of the ducal house were endowed with appanages and cut themselves loose from the parent stem. Simultaneously began a

series of encroachments from without. Laying hold of Bari and Monte Gargano in the year 840, the Saracen pirates remained a thorn in her side for thirty years. When they disappeared the Eastern Empire stepped into the vacant provinces. Apulia and the Capitanata were entirely merged in a Byzantine province. The dukes of Beneventum were compelled to pay tribute at Constantinople, and during an interregnum (891–895) the duchy was administered by Byzantine officials. A brief period of revival followed. Capua and Beneventum were reunited in the year 900: Pandulf Tête de Fer (943–981) added to them Salerno and Spoletum. Learning wisdom from the story of the past, he wished to sever the connection with the Eastern Empire whose European provinces were fast becoming the prey of the Saracens. For a moment there was a likelihood that the last of the Lombard States would be merged in the Holy Roman Empire of the Ottos. But with the death of Pandulf (981) vacillation and decline set in once more. The Normans appeared in Southern Italy and marked his dominions for their prey. Capua fell before them in 1062; Salerno in 1075. The successors of Pandulf threw themselves upon the protection of the Holy See; but in 1077 their line became extinct and their possessions escheated to St. Peter. The same fate was shared in the thirteenth century by Spoleto. Thus at length those claims upon Southern Italy, which Hadrian had formulated in 774, found their realisation, and the "immunity" which the Carolingians had granted to the Popes threatened to

assume the proportions and prerogatives of an independent kingdom.

Unlike Beneventum the Duchy of Spoletum always formed a part of the Empire. It was one of the five margraviates which in the ninth century usurped almost the whole of the Imperial power in Italy. The other four were Ivrea, Turin, or as it is sometimes called the Mark of Italy, Tuscany, and Friuli. Three of the four were built up by hereditary counts in the course of the ninth century. Tuscany, for example, was gradually acquired by the family which ruled over Lucca and the neighbourhood. Friuli, on the contrary, was a Lombard duchy which Charles had spared when he parcelled out the rest of Northern Italy in counties of comparatively small extent. Friuli formed a bridge between the German and Italian lands of the Empire; it reached on the north-east to the valley of the Danube and on the south it touched the coast line of the Adriatic. It was too large for safety and underwent a gradual process of dismemberment. In 828 the counties of Carinthia, Carniola, and Istria were removed from its jurisdiction. Out of what remained Otto the Great constituted the Mark of Verona-Aquileia. But here, as in the rest of Northern Italy, communes soon sprang up; the power of the Imperial representative was undermined by them. Verona, Padua, Vicenza, and other cities were granted or usurped the rights of self-government; Treviso became the centre of another and a smaller mark in the hands of whose governor were united what fragments of Imperial jurisdiction yet remained. In

the twelfth century this Mark also was abolished, and the prerogatives formerly exercised by its governors were transferred to the House of Este.

The transmutations of the other Italian margraviates were even more important in determining the future course of history. Until the advent of the Saxon Emperors the struggles of their owners for the Crown of Italy are almost the sole traces of political activity in the peninsula. Berenger of Ivrea, his namesake of Friuli, and Lambert of Spoletum all had their brief day of greatness. Otto I. reduced these upstart principalities to their old position, but their story is far from ending with his coronation. In 1027 Spoletum and Tuscany were united in the hands of Bonifacio,a staunch adherent of the Franconian Emperors. His family became extinct in the fourth generation: its accumulated possessions drifted out as a derelict upon the troubled sea of Italian politics, and through the bequest of the Countess Matilda became an additional source of feud between the Papacy and Empire. In like manner Turin and Ivrea were brought together when, in 1060, Adelaide of Turin wedded Oddone of Savoy. Their union proved the starting point of the only dynasty which has survived all the vicissitudes of Italian history.

To pursue this fascinating subject further would demand a separate volume. It is enough to have illustrated what the future had in store for the kingdom of Lombardy. All these developments and revolutions followed as the inevitable consequence of the arrangements made by Charles. From the

first moment that a single province became a hereditary fief the rest was merely a matter of time. We may blame the son and the grandsons of the Emperor; but we must bear in mind that he bequeathed to them a vicious system.

We pass on to consider the settlement of the German frontier.

On the south-east this was effected once for all in the year 803. During the summer of that year, which he passed at Regensburg with the ostensible object of hunting in the Böhmerwald, Charles formed the Ostmark, and permitted the Avars who dwelled outside it to be ruled by their own national chiefs on condition of accepting Christianity and acknowledging his overlordship. After the year 826 we hear no more of the Avars; they are swallowed up in the hordes of Slavonic immigrants. From the latter the Empire had nothing to fear. It is not before the opening years of the tenth century that Germany finds herself again confronted by a barbarian invader coming in from the lower valley of the Danube. Of the two margraves, by whom the Ostmark was administered, one kept watch upon the Bohemians and Moravians, while the other held his station in the valley, where to-day stand Pressburg and Vienna. South of the Mark and outside its limits were the Carentanians in Styria, Carniola, and Carinthia. The Margrave of Friuli was in a general sense responsible for their tranquillity, but they had a count and a bishop of their own. The Ostmark retained its original constitution until the year 876. The two margraviates were then united in the hands

RELIQUARY AT A .CHEN; SAID TO CONTAIN THE BONES OF CHARLES.
(From Vétault's "Charlemagne.")

of a single duke. Conquered by the Magyars, reconquered by Otto the Great, the duchy retained its individuality intact through all changes of ownership and became in due time, under the name of Austria, the nucleus of the Hapsburg dominions.

The Bohemian question was settled with more difficulty and less finality. The Emperor sent two expeditions against the Czechs and neither achieved a very definite result. In 805 three armies entered Bohemia from three several quarters. One from Saxony crossed the Elbe and marched through the Erzgebirge; a second from Bavaria came down the valley of the Moldau; Charles the Young brought a third from Franconia to the sources of the Eger and there effected a junction with the other two. For forty days they wasted the cultivated lands on both sides of the Elbe. Some of the Czechs found refuge in fortified camps, at Wysehrad and elsewhere, from which the invader vainly tried to dislodge them; others, taking to the woods, carried on an effective warfare of skirmish and surprise. The provisions of the Franks were soon exhausted and they retreated homewards. Next year the Burgundians, Alemannians, and Bavarians were sent to make a demonstration in Bohemia; they returned, we are told "without any grave disaster," and presumably without any considerable success. Charles abandoned these aggressive tactics for the future. West of the Fichtelgebirge he formed a Bohemian Mark which he committed to the charge of Audulf, the Seneschal, whose previous success against the Bretons had given him a reputation of quite another kind than one might

expect from his literary surname of "Menalcas." It is possible that Audulf's vigorous methods extended Frankish influence beyond the mountains; for Bohemian tradition speaks of an annual tribute—500 silver marks, 120 head of cattle—paid annually at Aachen, and the name of Charles has to this day, in the language of the Czechs, the significance of "King." Bohemia is mentioned in the will of Lewis the Pious (817) as forming a part of the Empire.*

We gather from our scanty evidence that Bohemia was more vigorously and persistently assailed both by Charles and by his successors than any other of the eastern lands. As yet the Teuton saw little to be gained by migrating in this direction. The early conquests of the Emperor were regarded as more than sufficient. The population of Germany was sparse, and it seemed mere folly to acquire new territories while in Saxony, Franconia, and Suabia there remained so many unoccupied tracts which would richly repay the cultivator. Thus the country of the Avars was abandoned almost as soon as won. The Margraves of the Elbe were not expected, like their successors under the Ottos, to carry the Imperial eagle further to the east. It was enough to hold what had been already won and to chastise from time to time the presumption of Germany's barbarous neighbours. Only in the case of Bohemia was this moderation cast aside. The valley of the Moldau was fertile and easy of access. From early times it had been the haunt of adventurous Frankish merchants. One of these, Samo by name, had actu-

* *Vide* W. W. Tomek, *Geschichte Böhmens* (Prag, 1875), pp. 16 foll.

ally raised himself to the position of a powerful king (623). Others returned to tell of his good fortune and to indicate the vulnerable points of this servile people. It was, therefore, only natural to regard the Czech as fore-doomed to be the subject of the Frank. From the first the latter laid his plans without fear and without compunction.

On this conquest the first Emperor was less passionately bent than his descendants and imitators. Important as they were, the campaigns of Charles the Young and of Audulf, the Seneschal, pale into insignificance when compared with those which Lewis the German undertook. At the beginning of the ninth century racial antipathies were merely nascent. Many years have yet to elapse before we catch the first notes of the now familiar diatribes against "the stinking race," the born helots of the Teutonic peoples, who are to be "tempted with hay like oxen and driven with blows like asses." Nor was the Slav a political danger in the reign of Charles. It is true that vagrant colonies of the Czechs drifted into the valley of the Main and settled here; but the Moravian Empire and the Pan-Slavonic federation were undreamed of. The intention of Charles was indeed to annex Bohemia and to denationalise the inhabitants; but he found the missionary more serviceable than armies: he planned a peaceable and gradual assimilation. By the year 824 German and Italian priests were already preaching beyond the Böhmerwald under the paternal guidance of Papacy and Empire. In Moravia and all the adjacent lands the German party became so strong that Cyril and

Methodius, the "apostles of the Slav," found it expedient, Greeks of Byzantium though they were, to acknowledge the Papal supremacy and to fall into line with the German hierarchy. At a later period these peaceful weapons failed the Teuton. Mojmir and Svatopluk brought beneath their sway Bohemia, Silesia, the land of the Sorbs, and eastern Galicia. Vigorously assailed by the armies and the diplomacy of Lewis the German their power held its own, and threatened to form no inconsiderable barrier to the further expansion of the Teutonic races. The invasion of the Magyars, while it shook to the foundations the political edifice of Charles the Great, at least averted the Slavonic peril. The realm of Svatopluk fell asunder: part went to the Magyar, part to the rising power of Poland; the remnants became the Bohemian duchy and this a fief of the Holy Roman Empire, ruled by a dynasty of German sympathies and a Church in which the German element was predominant. Radical indeed was the change in the eastern situation between the years 800 and 1000, and the policy of the Empire changed in like measure. But with regard to Bohemia the ideas originated by Charles the Great were never abandoned until the time when the influence of the Luxemburgs fostered a new outburst of the national Czechish sentiment and withdrew Bohemia from its more intimate contact with Germany.

Of the lands between the Elbe, the Saale, and the Oder there is less to say. Charles the Great found and left them peopled by scattered tribes, among whom the Sorbs, the Wiltzes, and the Abotrites were

the most prominent. Some of these tribes were warlike and obstinately devoted to paganism; none were sufficiently numerous to cause grave anxiety. They were overawed by occasional raids and paid tribute to the Emperor. The Abotrites, as being the most peaceful of them all, were encouraged to establish a hegemony over their neighbours and to colonise those parts of Transalbingian Saxony which the ruthless deportations of 804 had left a solitude. For the defence of the borders the Emperor built with Frankish labour and garrisoned with Frankish troops a line of forts extending from Magdeburg to Forcheim in the upper valley of the Main. Over this boundary line the Slavs came unhindered to exchange amber and other rarities for the wares of Frankish merchants. But the latter were forbidden to cross it; the danger of an illicit trade in weapons was too great. Thus in Northern Germany the Teuton stood purely on the defensive: the formless agglomerate of tribes to the eastward was left to be subdued in the future by the Saxon nobles, the Hansa cities, the knights of the Teutonic order, and the archbishops of the see of Magdeburg. The advance to the Oder begins with Otto I. rather than with Charles.

But on this side an enemy more terrible than the Slav had now appeared. From the peninsula of Denmark the Northmen were watching uneasily the movements of the Franks in the Transalbingian Mark. A hostile power had replaced their old allies, the Saxons: a power which not improbably would be tempted to retaliate for maritime piracies by an overwhelming irruption on the landward side.

Their fears would seem to have been groundless; it was enough for the Emperor that he had stationed upon the coast of Frisia and Neustria a fleet sufficiently numerous to repel the buccaneers; at that moment nothing was further from his thoughts than a campaign beyond the Eider. The time was still far distant when Denmark should pay tribute to the Holy Roman Empire. But from the moment that Charles planted his colonies of Abotrites in Transalbingia, King Godefrid began to show signs of uneasiness (804). In 808 the Northman attacked his new neighbours with the support of their rivals the Wiltzes. He followed up his campaign by constructing, south of the Eider, an immense earthen rampart reaching from sea to sea. It had only one gate large enough to admit waggons and horses; nothing of the kind had been seen in Germany since the days of the Romans; known as the Danework, it long survived its builder and remained the boundary line between the Teuton and the Scandinavian until the year 934.* For more security Godefrid destroyed at the same time the neighbouring emporium of Ruric which had hitherto formed the meeting-ground of Frankish and Danish merchants.

The Emperor showed great willingness to treat with the Northmen. In 804 he had assented to proposals for a conference between his counts and their chiefs; he did the same in 809, although the other side had failed to keep the first appointment. Only when he found a peaceful settlement impracticable did he think of war. Even then he showed an in-

* Giesebrecht I. p. 234 (5th edition).

clination to stand upon the defensive. He ordered new ships to guard the coast; he stationed garrisons at all the principal harbours and landing places; in the centre of Nordalbingia he founded the important stronghold of Itzehoe to watch the Danework. The courage of Godefrid rose when he saw the patience of his foe. He is said to have boasted that he would go with his army to Aachen and see if the Emperor would fight to defend his own palace. At his instigation a fleet of two hundred corsairs fell upon Frisia, ravaged far and wide, and departed only on receiving tribute from the inhabitants. The Emperor was roused at length. He projected a serious attack upon the Danework. At the head of a large army he marched out to Verden—it was the last occasion on which he took the field. Fortunately his enfeebled frame was not subjected to the test of a campaign. At Verden he received the news that Godefrid had fallen by the hand of an injured jarl. The King's fall was followed by a civil war of the kind familiar to readers of Scandinavian history. His nephew and heir, Hemming by name, gladly offered peace to the Franks that he might be undisturbed in dealing with his rebellious subjects (811). He fell in battle only a year later, but Harold and Raginfrid, his successors, renewed the treaty; they, too, had difficulties at home—their Norwegian dominions were in revolt. The Emperor accepted the respite and left the Northmen unmolested. All that he did was to concentrate new fleets at Ghent and Boulogne. On the sea coast naval was substituted for military service. At Boulogne the old Roman harbour and

lighthouse were repaired. This was something, but not enough. He hardly realised that the time had come when the Franks must at any cost hold the command of the North Sea.

The Monk of St. Gall is responsible for two stories respecting his relations with the pirates, which have obtained wide currency. One relates how, in a certain campaign, the Emperor took the young children of the Northmen and slew all of them who were taller than his sword; the other, in a gentler vein, that one day sitting at meat in his hall at Narbonne he saw from the window the flash of white sails far out on the horizon, and said: "These are no merchants," and rose from his seat and watched them out of sight, and shed bitter tears, saying: "I am very sorrowful, for I see what woes these men will bring upon my posterity and their subjects." Both the tales appear to be fabrications. The Emperor never attacked the Danes in their own country, nor did the long ships of the vikings pass, in his day, through the Pillars of Hercules. The narrators of after generations read his life in the light of their own experience; they could not but suppose that their hero had foretold and had striven to avert the most fatal calamity which ever befell his Empire.

True it is that the future caused him much anxiety. But the danger which he feared was that of dynastic dissensions. He appears to have thought that, could these be avoided, enemies beyond the frontier and a feeble administration within it were dangers of secondary moment. His own experience and the history of the Merovingians taught him the danger

OTTO III. DISCOVERS THE TOMB OF CHARLEMAGNE.

(From Vétault's "Charlemagne.")

of a divided succession, yet he shrank from disinheriting his younger sons. To satisfy their claims, and at the same time avoid the total dismemberment of the Empire, he drew up in 806 a deed of partition, which was approved by the Frankish magnates and the Pope.* It bequeathed to Lewis Aquitaine, Gascony, Septimania, Provence, and Southern Burgundy: to Pepin, Lombardy, Italy, Bavaria, and Alemannia south of the Danube; to their elder brother, Charles, all the remaining dominions, namely, Frankland, and Northern Burgundia, Frisia, Saxony, Hesse, and Franconia.

In making the partition Charles had a delicate problem to solve. Like his father before him, he wished to draw the lines of demarcation in such a way that they might be easily obliterated when the opportunity should arise. But the situation with which he started was more complex than that of 768. Three under-kingdoms were already in existence, and there were good reasons why they should not change hands at his death. Each must therefore form the nucleus of the portion assigned to its present owner. It followed that the federal kingdoms would be far more homogeneous than had been those of Charles himself and Carloman his brother. To prevent the growth of national antipathies certain precautions were observed. The first was to place the elder brother in a position of distinct superiority.

* Probably the assent of the Pope was asked because the testament provided for the descent of the Patriciate. The document is printed by Boretius Capp. Vol. 1, p. 126 *(M. H. G.)* and by Bouquet, *Rerum Script.* V. p. 771.

He was to have the Rhine-land and ancient Francia with all their strongholds and proud associations. Moreover, the area of his kingdom was roughly speaking equal to that of the other two taken together. Legally Pepin and Lewis could not be bound to accept their brother's lead; but in fact they would be too weak to venture on a course of open opposition. The second precaution was to give all three in common the dignity of the Patriciate, by which they would be pledged to act harmoniously for the protection of the Papacy and the common interests of Christendom. The third was copied from the partition effected by Pepin. To each of the existing under-kingdoms were annexed certain provinces of a different race and of doubtful allegiance; all the brothers were burdened in equal measure with the duty of maintaining some part of the frontier. To Charles the Young were assigned Saxony and Brittany, to Pepin Bavaria and the Mark of Spoletum, to Lewis the Spanish provinces and the dependent Duchy of Gascony. Lest we should suppose this arrangement fortuitous, the Emperor expresses his intention in the clearest terms. The brothers are to live in peace and concord; their disputes are to be settled by arbitration; each shall help the others at need against the attacks of foreign enemies. The realm of the Franks, though divided into three sections, is to preserve an essential unity. One clause of the deed recommends that intermarriages be encouraged between the subjects of the several kingdoms. The possibility of a disputed succession is foreseen and a definite rule laid down. Should one

of the brothers die his subjects shall have the power of choosing whether they will be ruled by one of his children; and the uncles are forbidden to question the title of their nephew. Should there be no heir whom the people will accept, the vacant kingdom is to accrue in equal shares to the surviving brothers. Nor does the Emperor leave the mode of division indeterminate. He defines the shares into which each one of the three kingdoms shall, when necessary, be divided and thus provides for every possible contingency. He appears to have expected that, as in previous cases of partition, two of the three collateral dynasties would be extinguished or repudiated at no great distance of time. Altogether, the articles of partition are a remarkable instance of natural sagacity struggling against inherited prejudice and mischievous tradition. It is a little strange that no attempt should be made to devise the Imperial dignity. Conferred upon the elder son it would have greatly strengthened his claim to suzerainty over his juniors. It would seem that Charles had not yet learned to think of the Empire as hereditary, or even as a permanent institution. He himself had been elected; the Franks and Romans might, if they chose, find him a successor.

That these precautions would have proved effectual is hardly probable. They were, however, not put to the proof; only five years later Charles the Young died leaving no heir, and Pepin soon followed him. There remained to share the inheritance only Lewis and his nephew the young Bernhard of Italy. The latter was a mere boy, and the legitimacy of his

birth was a matter of dispute; it would have been easy to avoid a divided succession by setting him aside. The Emperor, however, refused to take the opportunity; he treated Bernhard as the lawful heir of Pepin, only stipulating that Italy should be treated as a fief of the Frankish crown. This arrangement was received with general approbation. Charles had no further occasion to legislate respecting his inheritance. It was well for his peace of mind that he could not forecast the future; otherwise he would have known that within a few years the nephew would be stripped of his share by the uncle, and that the latter would in his turn fall a victim to the jealousies and unnatural ambitions of his own children. Till the moment of his father's death Lewis remained an unknown quantity. His career in Aquitaine had been so chequered that little information as to his character could be deduced from it. In all fiscal matters his administration had been disastrously negligent, and the utmost efforts of the Imperial *missi* were once required to extricate the finances of Aquitaine from their embarrassments. On the other hand, his frontier policy had been well conceived and the results were creditable to his generalship. And if he had shown some weakness in the face of Aquitanian feudalism, he could point with legitimate pride to the wholesome reformation which, with the help of St. Benedict, he had effected in the Aquitanian Church. The *Couronnement de Louis* assures us that already the Prince was despised by the Frankish warriors as an effeminate devotee; but this poem was written in the light of later events.

We know that Charles had on several occasions expressed his satisfaction with the bearing of his second son. There is no reason to believe that his heart misgave him when he committed the fortunes of the Franks to that feeble hand.

The character of Lewis was a complex one, and his good or evil fortune had endowed him, far more richly than his father, with certain of the softer virtues. But the general impression with which we are left by the panegyrics of his admirers borders very nearly on contempt. They show us a man eminently fitted to be the ornament of a cloister cell, and by his very virtues disqualified for a position of command. His learning was more profound than that of Charles; but while the father displayed in matters intellectual an omnivorous curiosity which spurred the scholars of his Court into every branch of useful study, the son had the narrow interests of a commentator, and loved the best those branches of knowledge from which no advantage of any kind could reasonably be expected. We are told that Lewis abhorred the classical poets for their paganism. The trait reveals the obedient disciple of Alcuin; only the instincts of Alcuin had been sounder than his reason, and his austere orthodoxy was tempered by a genuine taste for literature. Charles maintained his personal ascendancy over the most turbulent of aristocracies partly through his tact and genial humour, partly by the stern dignity which made an angry word or an offended glance from him more terrible to the object of it than a flash of lightning. Lewis could neither conciliate nor overawe. Demure, silent, unassuming,

he was the least conspicuous figure in his own Court; no man ever heard him jest; he knew not how to laugh. Both father and son were pious at heart. But the piety of the old Emperor was martial, that of a man having authority; he went to church as to a parade-ground; he went to learn whether his choristers sang in tune, whether their vestments were properly worn, whether they knew the words of command and the orders of the day. Lewis from the introit to the recessional was wholly absorbed in his own pious meditations. At the church door he invariably fell upon his face and before God and his own servants confessed himself a miserable sinner. As he prayed in his stall one might see his face working with emotion and the tears streaming down his cheeks. In business the methods of the two men were equally dissimilar. The father enquired into every affair, mastered all its details, and cut the knot of every difficulty which it involved; whatever might be his faults, indolence and indecision were not among their number. The son distrusted his own judgment and loathed the burden of responsibility. He was never so happy as when he could leave everything to his ministers and devote himself to the pursuits of a student. This indolence was the more serious because his agents were rarely chosen with discretion. Those of his father passed through a long and severe probation; his own confidence was recklessly bestowed on the companions of the moment. Charles had been steadfast in his policy and in his friendships; Lewis was fickleness itself. To make the matter worse, Lewis was weakly lavish

where his father had been wisely generous. The gifts of the one were a reward for faithful services; Lewis would give away his very crown to propitiate a worthless friend or regain the affection of a disobedient son.

It may have been the hope of strengthening his successor's position, but more probably emulation of Byzantium was the chief motive which now induced the old Emperor to forego his former moderation and to declare the Imperial title hereditary. Before the year 812 there had been the danger that such a step would involve his descendants in an awkward feud with their rivals on the Bosphorus. Their legitimate responsibilities were serious enough without the addition of a dubious title to be defended. The treaty of 812 removed these apprehensions. Since the Greeks had acknowledged Charles as the equal of their own Basileus, they could not well complain if he exercised the same prerogative of nominating his successor. A legal sanction had been given to the second Empire by those who had at first impugned it as a usurpation. If legal it had a right to be permanent. If permanent it ought to descend in the same way as the power on which it was modelled. And it was too valuable as an embellishment of the royal dignity to be lightly abandoned. Accordingly, the magnates were convened at Aachen and invited to express their opinion as to the disposal of the Empire. They knew what answer was expected of them. Eginhard, acting as their spokesman, fell on his knees before his master's footstool and suggested the name of Lewis. The latter was then summoned

from Aquitaine to receive the decision. A coronation in the church at Aachen followed immediately afterwards (Sept. 11, 813). Warned by his own experience of papal pretensions, Charles asked neither the consent nor the assistance of Leo. Father and son were the only actors in the ceremony, which, as far as possible, was divested of ecclesiastical formalities.

After prayers appropriate to the occasion had been offered, the old Emperor made a long address to his son. The substance of it, as given by the biographer of Lewis, was this: that he should love God and protect the churches; that he should show unfailing kindness to all members of the royal house; that he should respect the clergy as his fathers and love the people as his children. Having given a solemn promise to observe these admonitions Lewis, at his father's bidding, took the crown from off the altar and placed it on his own head. Of this remarkable proceeding all the nobles and superior clergy were the witnesses. It was a symbolical protest that the future Emperor held his dignity of no superior save God alone. In fact, everything was done that forms could do to confer an unencumbered title or to defend a man from the weakness of his own resolution. Such as the advantage was, three years had not passed before Lewis bartered it for the inconstant friendship of the Holy See*; and in the course of his unhappy

* The Papacy resented the action of Charles in crowning Lewis. In 816 Stephen IV. came to Rheims and persuaded Lewis to be crowned a second time by him. So, too, when Lewis crowned his eldest son Lothaire in 817: in 823 Pascal enticed Lothaire to Rome and crowned him again.

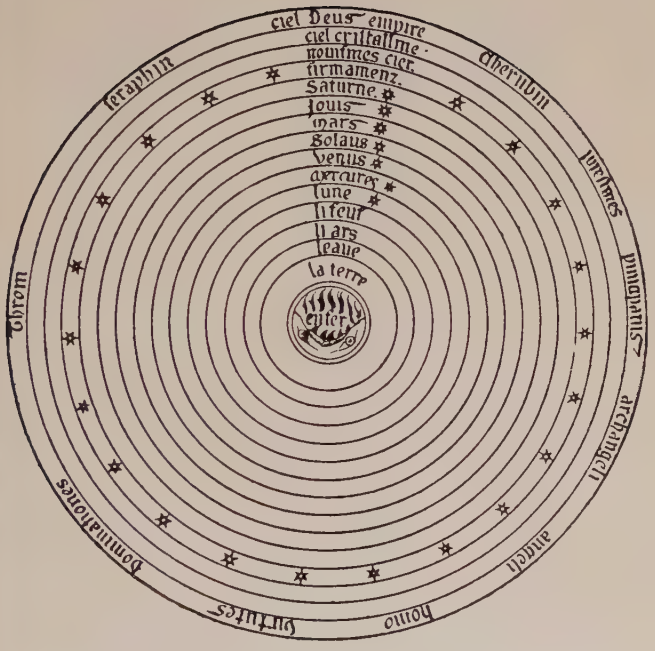
reign he did not blush to avow himself the creature of his own episcopate.

From the coronation Lewis returned immediately to his own kingdom. So long as his father lived his new powers were to remain in abeyance. But the sands of his father's life were almost run. Charles hunted and did business as usual after the departure of his son; but gout and the prodigious labours of forty years had enfeebled his mighty frame. He had reached the span allotted by the Psalmist to humanity; he had lasted full twenty years longer than most great statesmen of the Middle Ages. It is little wonder that the romancers speak of him as a hundred or two hundred years old; among the men of that day he was indeed a Methuselah. He felt that his work was done, and contemplated retiring to a monastery for a brief period of rest before he should go to his last account. Already, two years before the coronation of Lewis, he had made his testament. The substance of it is preserved in Eginhard's biography. He directed that three-fourths of the gold and silver in his treasury should be immediately sealed up and reserved for distribution at his death among the twenty-one metropolitan churches of the Empire. The remaining fourth continued to be used for current expenses: when he died or retired to a religious house it was to be divided in four. One of these parts was to be added to the share of the churches, a second to be divided among his children, a third was assigned to the slaves and servants of the Palace, while the fourth was to be expended in almsgiving. To the poor he also bequeathed whatever

might be realised by the sale of his books and household furniture. A special clause was added respecting three tables of silver, and a fourth of gold, which were the most prized of his possessions. The first was engraved with a plan of Constantinople; he left it to the basilica of St. Peter in Rome. The second, bearing a plan of Rome, was for the church of St. Apollinaris at Ravenna—a town with which as Patrician he was closely associated. The third was a planisphere representing the courses of the stars, and the universe as conceived in the Ptolemaic system; it was curiously wrought out of three discs joined together. Together with the golden tablet, of which the design is not specified, it was to be broken up, and the metal equally divided between his heirs and the poor.*

The Emperor spent the last weeks of the year 813 at Aachen. He occupied his time in almsgiving, in prayer, and in correcting his manuscripts of the sacred texts. Late in the month of January he was seized by a violent fever on which a pleurisy soon supervened. He had never placed his faith in physicians and now refused their advice, preferring to try his favourite remedy of starvation. This only made him weaker; on the seventh day his condition was so plainly hopeless that the arch-chaplain was called in to give him the eucharist. Next morning, a little before sunrise, he passed quietly away. His last audible words are said to have been: "Lord,

* Lewis executed the will with the exception of these three bequests. The maps and the golden tablet remained in the Imperial treasury until 842, when they were melted down by Lothaire.



PLANISPHERE SHOWING THE PTOLEMAIC SYSTEM OF THE UNIVERSE, WITH HELL AT THE CENTRE.

Charlemagne owned one of these, and it is mentioned in his will.

into thy hands I commend my spirit." That same day he was buried in the church of the Virgin; we may perhaps infer from this uncourtly haste that like his father he had developed dropsical symptoms. Tradition affirms that he was placed on a chair of state, within a little shrine or chapel of stone, and that his sword Joyeuse was laid unsheathed across his knees.

> Tel sepulture n'ara mais rois en terre
> Il ne gist mie, ainçois i siet acertes,
> Sur ses genolx l'espée en son poing destre
> Encore menace la pute gent averse.

In the year 1000 A.D. an idle curiosity led Otto III. to test the truth of the legend. One who claims to have been present on that occasion informs us that they found the body still in a sitting position, the garments intact, the flesh uncorrupted. The dead Emperor grasped a sceptre, and about his neck there was a gold chain. The nails on his fingers had grown so long that they had pierced the gauntlets which he wore. There was no sign of decay except that the tip of the nose had disappeared. Otto caused the disfigurement to be repaired with gold, and the corpse to be clad in white raiment. He took away the chain, also one of the Emperor's teeth for a relic. The story is not without its difficulties. It is evident from the hurried nature of the funeral that the body was not embalmed; and antiquarians have failed to discover at Aachen any traces of a vault such as the epics and the historian of Otto III. describe. If so conspicuous a tomb had

ever existed it would hardly escape pillage by the Northmen at the end of the ninth and beginning of the tenth centuries.

Eginhard has preserved the epitaph which was inscribed on a triumphal arch above the tomb: "Beneath this covering lies the body of Charles, the Great and Orthodox Emperor, who nobly enlarged the realm of the Franks and reigned happily for 47 years. He died at the age of 70, in the year of the Incarnation 814."

The lamentations of his subjects were long and loud. The Empire which he had founded was still popular; the prospect of its dissolution filled all men with dismay.

"Woe to thee, Rome, and woe to the people of Rome. The great and glorious Charles is taken from you. Woe to thee, Italy, and to all thy fair cities. Many are the afflictions that Frankland has known, but never knew she such a sorrow as when at Aachen she laid in the earth the august and eloquent Charles." Such was the threnody which an obscure monk composed for him.

The only censures which jarred with the chorus of panegyric proceeded from the Church in whose service the best years of the Emperor had been spent. Two legends concerning him, to which she set the seal of her approval, are both depreciatory. One told how the monk Wettin, being carried over purgatory in a vision, saw Charles tortured there by the worm which dieth not, and lamenting for the sins which he had committed in the flesh. The second, of Spanish origin, related that when his vir-

THE CHARLEMAGNE OF EPIC.

FROM THE PAINTING BY ALBRECHT DÜRER.

tues were weighed against his vices the latter would have sunk the beam, had not St. James of Compostella thrown into the opposite scale the churches which his champion had built.

The Papacy long refused to canonise the man who had exalted the secular above the spiritual power. Even before the Protestants of the Reformation had taunted her with the *Libri Carolini* she cherished a deep though unspoken resentment against the mighty Emperor whose examples of contumacy had nerved the Hohenstauffen. It was Frederic Barbarossa who at length obtained place in the calendar for Charlemagne, and it was an anti-Pope who acceded to his prayer. Only a Ghibelline poet could, even in the fourteenth century, have set Charlemagne in Paradise by the side of Joshua and Godfrey of Boulogne. That he ranked until the present century as a Father of the Church, and that his name remained upon the roll of saints, must be attributed entirely to the strength of popular feeling in his favour, and to the deep policy of Louis XI., who thought that the idea of the French monarchy could not be better served than by linking it with the name and cult of Charlemagne. The laity judged better than the priesthood. The Catholic Church had never a more faithful servant, and the national Church of Germany was the proudest monument of his régime.

CHAPTER XII

FATE OF THE FRANKS—THE LEGEND OF CHARLEMAGNE

TO all intents and purposes the Frankish Empire was buried in the grave of Charles at Aachen. Five of his descendants wore the imperial title: Lewis the Pious (840), Lothaire (855), Lewis II. (875), Charles the Bald (877), Charles the Fat (888). Theoretically the Empire only came to an end when the German nobles deposed Charles the Fat and chose Arnulf of Carinthia to be their king. In reality the last seventy years of its history had been one long death-agony; its fall was welcomed with delight by the nations which had belonged to it; only at the Papal Court and among some families claiming descent from the first Emperor was there any affection for the old idea of European unity.

As we have seen above, the causes of decay are principally to be found in the internal organisation of the Empire. Charles the Great ruled by the help of the Church and of a rude feudalism. Presuming on his control of the hierarchy, trusting to his personal influence with the Holy See and with national

synods, he allowed the wealth and power of the clergy to increase without limit; conscious that all the nobles were his vassals, and over-confident that their special oath of fealty would keep them loyal to his successors, he watched with indifference, or at least neglected to check, the process by which all freeholders were forced to group themselves round the banner of count or bishop. It was the duke and the count, the abbot and the bishop, who sapped the vigour of the Carolingian Empire.

But special and accidental causes accelerated the downfall. The Frankish nation, which for so many generations had imposed its yoke upon Teuton and Latin alike; which had furnished Charles with warriors, administrators, ecclesiastics; which more than any other race had assimilated the Imperial idea—this nation came to a sudden and a violent end through the weakness of Lewis the Pious and the savage ambitions of his family. Bewildered by the arguments with which they were plied by the several factions of the royal house, loving the Empire, but uncertain in which line the Empire should rightfully descend, the flower of the race were drawn some to this camp and some to that; Franks fought against Franks for the possession of the Empire, and knew not that the prize for which they fought was crumbling away to nothingness. These fatal feuds began in the year 817 when Lewis the Pious first broached the calamitous project of admitting his children into partnership; like Lear, he put off his clothes before he went to bed, and the fate of Lear was his reward. The Franks, among whom he had thrown the apple of

discord, survived him but a few years. Their power as a nation was broken on the field of Fontanet (841). At Fontanet the sons of Lewis fought for supremacy; it was the bloodiest battle remembered in the annals of the Franks; forty thousand of their best and bravest were left upon the field. Regino of Prum remarks that from that day they who had been the conquerors of the world could barely muster men enough to guard their own frontiers.* The result is seen in the treaty of Verdun (843). It recognises three kingdoms. The greater part of Gaul, the greater part of Germany, have broken away from the Frankish supremacy; though ruled by princes of the Carolingian stem, they owe no obedience to the Emperor Lothaire. He and his Franks were left to content themselves with a straggling Middle Kingdom. This kingdom was indeed of no inconsiderable extent. It reached from the Rhine to the borders of the Papal States; it included the Lombard Plain and the valley of the Rhone, Alsace and Lorraine, the country between the Rhine and Meuse, also, westward of that river, the province known as Old Francia, from which Clovis had started on his career of conquest. But for the nation of Charles and the heir of his title the treaty of Verdun was a cruel humiliation.

There was, however, worse to come. The Franks were paralysed by the weight of two hostile nations on their frontiers. They could not hold even the Middle Kingdom. On the death of Lothaire in 855 it was divided between his three sons. Italy be-

* *M. H. G. Scriptores*, i., 568.

came a separate state; the Rhone valley followed suit.* Only Lotharingia remained to the men of Aachen and Tournay. They had ceased to be the masters of the other nations; next they ceased to be masters of themselves. On the death of their king, Lothaire II., in 869, his uncles, Lewis the German and Charles the Bald, made haste to divide the prey. They were the sovereigns of Germany and Gaul respectively—or, to use the deceptive terminology of that age, of the East Franks and the West Franks. By the treaty of Mersen in 870 they completed the partition of Lotharingia. The boundary as then defined ran from Herstal on the Meuse to Metz upon the Rhine. The Franks living west of that line were incorporated with France; those to the east with Germany. Henceforth the struggle for the Empire was to be waged, not between the Austrasian and his subjects, but between the kings of the various national states which had taken shape within the husk of the Empire. The Imperial pretensions of Lewis II. (855–875) were based upon the kingdom of Italy, those of his successor, Charles the Bald (875–877), upon the kingdom of the West Franks. Charles the Fat enjoyed his brief supremacy (882–887) only because the three kingdoms, France, Germany, and Italy, one after another, chose him for their sovereign and lord.

* The sons of Lothaire I. were: Ludwig II., who obtained Italy with the title of Emperor, Lothaire, from whom the kingdom of Lotharingia took its name, and Charles. The latter took the kingdom of Provence, comprising Provence proper, the Duchy of Lyons, and Upper Burgundy. In 856 Upper Burgundy was wrested from him by his brothers; in 888 by the great treaty of partition it became an independent kingdom.

The Empire had come to be the merest gewgaw, an empty title of honour, conferring on the holder no accession of power, entailing no new responsibilities.

As for the Franks, the Northmen completed what fraternal strife had begun. About the year 880 the long ships came to Frisia. The invaders found the land defenceless. They pitched their camp at Maestricht and sallied unhindered up the Meuse and up the Rhine where their fancy led them. All the great cities and strongholds of the Franks—Tongres, Liège, Julich, Köln, Trier, Nimeguen—fell before them. The flames consumed what the spoilers could not carry away. As a crowning outrage, the vikings plundered Aachen and stabled their horses in the dome which Charles had built.* In time they departed; in time church and town arose from their ashes. But it was no longer as the capital of the Franks, no longer as the seat of Empire that Aachen was to figure in the history of Europe. The hand of the Danes fell heavily enough upon the rest of Northern Europe. Already they had swept the northern frontier of Germany, burning Hamburg and chasing away its bishop, in the time of Lewis the Pious. The valour of Lewis III. could only purchase a temporary respite for France; and a few years later they wrested the duchy of Normandy from his successor to be a lasting trophy of their successes. France and Germany were humbled.

* Regino in *M. H. G. Scriptores*, i., 592, s. a. 781. So the *Annals of Fulda*: "In capella regis equis suis stabulum fecerunt." The relics were saved by being taken to Stablo; possibly some of the articles still shown at Aachen, as having been the property of Charlemagne, were among these relics.

THE EPIC CHARLEMAGNE ENTHRONED, AND SURROUNDED BY PRIESTS AND WARRIORS.
(*From Gautier's "La Chevalerie."*)

But the ancient homeland of Charles the Great was laid completely waste. So far as buildings and landmarks were concerned, the country might almost never have been inhabited since the withdrawal of the Romans. The very name of the Franks was no longer to be found in the lands between the Meuse and Rhine. Franconia on the east, the Isle of France on the west, still serve to remind us of the vanished nation. But the intervening tract of country ceases to be known as Frankland. Lotharingia is the only designation which it bears henceforth.

The Franks, however, left behind them memorials of another kind than words and masonry. Through devious paths we can for generations to come trace their influence upon history. Until the year 911 Germany was ruled by a dynasty of the right Frankish blood. The Saxon dukes who took up the sceptre when it fell from the hands of Conrad the Franconian, claimed relationship on the female side with the line of Charles the Great. At Laon until 987 there ruled another Carolingian family speaking the Frankish tongue and cherishing the tradition of the Frankish monarchy divinely ordained and sacrosanct. The House of Capet, which succeeded them, was still at pains to maintain the connexion with the past. The Empire which had flourished so gloriously for a short fifteen years was not forgotten. It lent to the two greatest mediæval European states the support of a romantic idealism, the sanction of a cloudy but imposing political theory. Charlemagne is the chosen saint of rulers so dissimilar as Barbarossa and Louis XI.

The practical statesmanship of the first Frankish Emperor had a surprisingly slight influence upon his successors. His Capitularies and his commissions produced the merest ripples on the surface of the deep waters of customary law. Even in the ninth century the institution of the *missi* was flung aside as useless; it is by other means that Henry the Fowler and Louis le Gros will curb the centrifugal tendencies of feudalism. His frontier policy is also reversed. France retires from the Ebro; Germany advances far beyond the Elbe. In some few cases his example has a definite effect. Lewis the German takes in succession for his counsellors Otgar and Raban Maur, pupils both of Alcuin's schools, the most Frankish of ecclesiastics, the most Carolingian of statesmen. In the next century Otto the Great will be guided by his brother Bruno, in whom the ideals of Otgar and Raban Maur are still a living force, and from Bruno will learn the arcanum of the Carolingian Empire—the maxim that the road to universal sovereignty runs through Rome. Later still, in the astute and complaisant Gerbert we can hardly fail to trace the thoughts of Hincmar, his predecessor in the See of Rheims; the grandiose dreams of Otto III. are fed by distorted recollections of Charles and Alcuin. Even in details there are now and then some imitations. Stray Capitularies are revived by the Saxon emperors. The coinage, the weights and measures, the trade regulations of medieval Germany, bear witness to the influence of Charles upon certain aspects of her social life. But for all this the more ambitious measures and expedi-

ents of Charles lay forgotten, as though they had never been. New nationalities required a new form of government. It is neither surprising nor inappropriate that Charles, the administrator, should be best remembered in after centuries for his ecclesiastical innovations, for the interpolation of the Nicene, and the vulgarisation of the Athanasian Creed; for his vigorous, though illogical and incomplete, protest against the more degrading superstitions of Eastern Christianity. He was not a Frenchman; he was not a German. If his training drew him to the Latins, his origin bound him to the Teutons. His aspirations may, perhaps, be termed Latin; the traditions of social and political life, to which he rendered an unwavering homage, are most certainly Teutonic. Both strains met and mingled in his many-sided nature. He belonged, in fact, to no nation of modern growth, but to the only nation which, in his day, deserved the name, to that nation in which local and racial differences were suppressed or transcended,—to the nation of the Catholic Church. As the servant of the Church he humbled the Saxon, treated with the Dane, and cowed the Slav; as the servant of the Church he led his armies first across the Alps and then across the Pyrenees. The civilisation which he fostered was catholic, like his religion, and the patrimony of Christendom at large.

"At the prayer of Monseigneur St. Jacques our Lord gave this boon to Charlemagne, that men should speak of him so long as the world endureth." The words are those of a Frenchman. The prophecy found its accomplishment in the lays of French min-

strels. The very name by which he is best known in history is the product of French invention. To his contemporaries the Emperor was Karolus or Karl. To us he will always be Charlemagne. The word is a hybrid compound of a Latin with a Teutonic stem; also it may be reprobated for the "suggestio falsi" which it carries. Still it has earned the right to exist, and the French nation may legitimately boast that Charles is theirs by adoption. He owes much to them, and they to him. On the one hand, they invested him with a cycle of romance; on the other, they borrowed from him the more imaginative ideas of his policy—the reverence for the Holy See, the interest in the eastern outposts of Christendom, the crusading zeal, of which we have seen no obscure traces in his career.*

Germany, too, possessed certain legends of Charles but those of them that entered into popular mythology were sparse and bare. He became a pale copy of the gods of Valhalla, he appropriated the mount of Odin†; the belated traveller heard him riding through the thunder-storm or along the Milky Way in the chariot of Thor. To learn the histories of Roland and of Turpin, of Ganelon and Marsila of the voyage to Jerusalem, of the twelve peers, of the wars with the Saracen in every land of Europe, we must repair to French poetry. The fact may

* In entering upon the poetic history of Charlemagne I must express my obligations to the valuable works of MM. Gaston Paris and Léon Gautier.

† Gudensberg in Hesse. It was said that Charles lay there waiting for the time of his second appearance. The same legend was afterwards annexed to the name of Frederic Barbarossa.

DOMINICAN COLLEGE LIBRARY
SAN RAFAEL

CHARLEMAGNE IN SPAIN.

UPPER LIGHTS OF A STAINED WINDOW AT CHARTRES (EARLY XIIITH CENTURY).

In the central medallion Roland appears twice. On the left he cleaves the rock with Durendal; on the right he winds the Oliphant.

seem strange to those who reflect that Germany did and France did not owe national existence to Charles. It is not so strange when we remember that Charles first appeared before the Germans in the light of a ruthless conqueror, and the destroyer of the individualism which they held so dear. Bavarian and Saxon, Thuringian and Saxon, quickly forgot the peace which he had given them in his declining years. They chiefly remembered the period in which he had swept to and fro like a whirlwind through their borders, crushing rebellion and dragging their youth away to fight in distant wars. To Gaul, on the other hand, he had been at all times a deliverer and defender. He had warded off an old enemy in the person of the Saracen, a new one in the person of the Dane. In spite of his ceaseless wars, the country had enjoyed comparative security; and those wars, costly as they were, had been waged in the interests of Gaul, and of ideas with which she was never slow to sympathise.

The origins of the Charlemagne cycle are wrapped in obscurity. We can say with certainty only this much: that the foundations of it were laid in the ninth century and the early part of the tenth. Numberless stories concerning the House of Arnulf were current among the inhabitants of Gaul. Minstrels seized upon striking episodes, such as the siege of Pavia or the rout at Roncesvalles, and composed short, stirring lays which took for granted in the auditors a knowledge of the outlines of events. Cycles of ballads clustered round the names of great warriors—of Eric of Friuli, of Gerold of Bavaria, of

Eggihard the seneschal, of Duke William of Toulouse.* And, far from being content with the bare facts, the authors added episodes from their own fancy, or from stories relating to earlier heroes. The exploits of Dagobert and of Charles Martel were confused with those of more modern conquerors. Old tales were frequently passed off under new names. Thus the popular tradition developed almost independently of literary authorities. The earlier *Chansons de gestes* reveal some acquaintance with the Court annals, with the biography of Charles by Eginhard, with that of Lewis the Pious by the Limousin Astronomer. But the information which they draw from these sources is of the vaguest and most general kind; it is freely altered to suit poetic requirements. The teaching of patriotic churchmen such as Hincmar and Notker had a more powerful effect upon the cycle at its commencement; for these writers moralised upon the character of Charles and made him a type of the perfect warrior and statesman.

During the ninth century there is a certain continuity of the literary tradition respecting Charles. Notker himself, whose book is a mirror of the tales which passed from mouth to mouth among the lower strata of society, nevertheless observes a certain

* Of the stories respecting Gerold we have a trace in the vision of the monk Wettin (Bouquet, v., 399). Wettin saw him in Paradise among the martyrs. Eric of Friuli is the subject of a Latin poem attributed to Paulinus of Aquileia. The exploits of Duke William find their way, in a confused form, into the Provençal cycle. We learn from the Astronomer (*M. H. G. Scriptores*, ii., 608) that even in the ninth century many stories were current about Roncesvalles.

caution. He himself had seen the Emperor; he had also talked much with men who had served in the Emperor's wars. However uncritical he may be, he has had means of information too full and good to admit of his straying very far from the path of history. But after him there comes a break. The literary world loses touch with the Carolingian period. It has lost sight of all landmarks, and readily lends itself to the task of expanding mere myths and legends. Thus Benedict of Soracte falsifies the narrative of Eginhard to prove that the Emperor in person visited Jerusalem. When this is done by a comparatively learned and sober chronicle, we may imagine what liberties were taken with the elastic framework of oral legends.

Of deliberate and sustained romance we have early examples, both in Latin and French. To the former class belong the first five chapters of the so-called "Chronicle of Turpin." These chapters, written before 1100, form a story, short but complete, of the Emperor's Spanish conquests. The author is interested in the shrine of St. James at Compostella, with which it is his object to connect Charles. Such a story can only be the work of a clerk attached to the shrine or of a zealous pilgrim. We have seen above how he brings the Emperor into Spain through the intervention of St. James. Having led him thither, he is not much concerned with any part of his feats except the visit to Compostella. He tells of the taking of Pampeluna, and how the walls fell down of themselves before the Franks. He also informs us that Charles remained three years in Spain and utterly

destroyed all the idols except those in Andalusia. Archbishop Turpin makes his appearance in the story, but merely as a missionary who accompanies the Emperor and baptises all those of the Saracens who submit. Obstinate unbelievers are, of course, either put to death or enslaved. Finally Charlemagne returns across the Pyrenees without any reverses. Apparently the author does not know or does not care to tell of Roncesvalles.

A greater success was achieved by the unknown author who, after the Conquest of England but before the First Crusade, composed the *Song of Roland*. Apparently a Norman minstrel who had lived in England he wrote for recitation to a popular audience. Still he is a great literary artist, and his poem has, in addition to its other excellencies, a fine dramatic unity. It is not to be confounded with the ballad which Taillefer sang as he led the Norman charge at Hastings, and which must have been in essentials like the Frankish sagas, written, that is to say, in abrupt strophes with lines of no great length. The *Song of Roland* contains about four thousand lines and is in a style more adapted to recitation than song. The author had at his command a number of well known lays to which he occasionally refers in passing. His poem is evidently intended to fill a place in a long cycle. The Emperor has already been seven years in Spain before the tale begins. With the exception of Marsila's stronghold of Saragossa, he has conquered Spain from sea to sea. The auditor is presumed to be familiar with the sieges of Noble, Pine, Tudela, Seville, and Cor-

Halt sunt li pui e mult halt les arbres
Quatre piriins i ad luisant de marbre.
Sur lerbe uerte liquens kolt se pasmet.
Y mil sarrazins mult ueit lesguardet.
Si se feinst mort sigalt entre les altres.
Del sanc luat sun cors y sun visage.
Ov et sei en piez y de cuinte sasez.
Bels fut y forz y de grant vasselage.
Par sun orgoill cumencet mortel rage.
Kolt saisit y sun cors y ses armes.
Y dist un mot uencut est li miels cadables.
Ceste espee porterai en arabe.
Quant cadres liquens sa cuit alques.
O sent kolt que ses spee li tolt.
Y urit les oilz si ad dit un mot.
Ov en es tu entre tu miels mie dos nor.
Cruel ot li sarazin que unkes pere ne uolt.
Sil fiert en lelme ki gemmez fut a or.
Fruisset la cer y la teste y les os.
Ansi a ouf les oilz del chef le ad mis fors.
Y us a ses piez sil ad cresturnet mort.
Apres li dit culuert paien cū fus unkes si os.
Que me saisis ne adreit ne a tort.
Mi el ortar hume ne remenget por fol.
Fenduz en .i. mis olifans el gros.
Cume en est cristals y nors.
Ca sent kolt la uerte ad pdue.
Ov et sei sur piez quanqui poet ses uer taiet.

FAC-SIMILE PAGE FROM THE "CHANSON DE ROLAND."

FROM THE DIGBY MS., BODLEIAN LIBRARY, OXFORD.

dova; with the circumstances under which two Frankish envoys, Basan and Basile, had been treacherously murdered by the infidel; with the personalities of the Emperor, of Roland and Oliver, of Geoffrey of Anjou, of Garin of Lorraine, and of many others. Also the poet reminds us that many famous feats of arms have already been performed by the Paladins in other lands. The past of the snow-haired Emperor contains whole epics of conquest. Says Roland to his sword Durendal:

By thee did I win him Anjou and Bretagne, and Poitou and Maine.
Won Normandy land of the free, Provence did I win, Aquitaine;
Lombardy, all the Romagna, Bavaria, Flanders I won;
Bulgaria, Poland, and homage hath Constantinople done;
Saxony doeth his pleasure, and Scotland for him did I gain,
Welshland and Ireland and England he made of his royal domain.*

Early as this poem is, it diverges very widely from the tone and spirit of the ninth century. New threads of interest are imported into the time-worn story; the leading ideas are of a kind appropriate to the age when the crusading spirit was beginning to stir the hearts of men. The treachery of Ganelon, the love of Roland for the damsel Alde, the glorification of a feudal nobility, which includes in its ranks the progenitors of the great French families,

* I have ventured to use the spirited translation of Messrs. Spencer & Way (Nutt, 1895).

the romantic enthusiasm of the exiled army for "la dulce France"—all these are striking innovations. In the hands of the later poets there is an ever-increasing tendency to develop these subsidiary motives at the expense of the central figure. The Emperor becomes a peg on which to hang stories of a modern kind.

Hence in the period of the great crusades the epic legend enters upon a new phase of development. It was widely believed that Charlemagne had risen from the dead to lead the first crusade. The minstrels seized upon the hint; they produced a new biography of the first Western Emperor in which he was depicted as the pattern crusader, and his life as one long war against the infidel. They elaborated the fiction of a voyage to Jerusalem and a subsequent visit to Constantinople. They corrupted the old ballads which told of national struggles against the Frank in Aquitaine, in Brittany, in Saxony, and Lombardy. Everywhere they brought in the Saracen. Witikind himself becomes a Saracen in the *Chanson des Saisnes* of Jean Bodel. Didier undergoes a similar transformation in the *Chevalerie Ogier*, and in *Aspremont*. We find a Saracen Emperor domiciled in Brittany. Naturally Spain was not forgotten. The pseudo-Turpin took up the Compostellan legend and added to it, besides the tale of Roncevaux, that of a great war between Charlemagne and Argolander, King of the Africans; the romance thus fabricated was published in the shape of an epistle from Turpin of Rheims to an archdeacon of his acquaintance. The pacific Archbishop Tilpin, of

whom we find occasional mention in Carolingian documents, would have been not a little astounded at the marvels to which he was made to lend the sanction of his name. But Frederic Barbarossa adduced the Chronicle to justify an anti-pope in canonising Charles; it became famous and, except the *Song of Roland*, no other work had a greater effect upon the development of the cycle.

In the thirteenth century another element in the old stories was brought into prominence. After the crusades were over the attention of Europe was concentrated on the well-nigh universal struggle between feudalism and royalty. The historic Charlemagne had his vassals and found them disobedient enough. The *Chansons de geste* (drawing, perhaps, upon the experience of his unhappy descendants at Laon) credited him with many others of whom history bears no record. The sympathy of the minstrels is on the side of the rebels. Accordingly, the character of the Emperor is degraded in order to throw the virtues of his nobles into relief. He becomes a sovereign of the Merovingian type, a sovereign like Charles the Simple. Gerard of Roussillon, Raoul of Cambrai, Guillaume of Montreuil, Renaud of Montauban, and their compeers are the true heroes of the cycle in this its third stage. To enumerate the poems relating to them would be tedious and unprofitable; for the vigour of the minstrels wanes as they wander from the original outlines of their theme, and the great ideas which animated the older epics vanish away with the triumph of individualism. The prologue to the *Chanson des*

Saisnes of Jean Bodel affords a favourable specimen of the new manner. It opens with an attack by Witikind upon Cologne. He has heard of the death of the twelve peers in Roncevaux; he has gathered the Saracens together that he may chase Charlemagne of Aix away from France. At Cologne he slays Duke Milo, and the beautiful Helissant is carried away to prison in Saxony. Then the scene shifts to Laon, where Charlemagne is keeping the feast of Pentecost. Fourteen kings sat down at table with the Emperor. Bishops and abbots without number were there. Pope Milo himself sang mass before the Court. The festival is disturbed by the news of Witikind's inroad. Charlemagne declares for war. But his barons protest; they have fought too much already. Let him tax the Hérupois for the war. He has favoured this people too much already; it is time that they bore a share of the burden. The Hérupois are the men of Normandy, Maine, and Brittany. They are indignant at the breach of their privileges. They threaten to gather their hosts together and to make war upon the Emperor. A hundred thousand of them will ride forth to burn his towns, his castles, and his boroughs. But later on they resolve to adopt a more moderate course. They march towards Laon in battle array with their tribute on the points of their lances. When the Emperor heard this he was sitting in his marble palace. The Pope was reading to him the life of St. Martin and explaining the Latin as he read. The Emperor rose and rode out to meet the rebellious barons. He was ashamed and repentant when he saw them. He de-

STATUE OF CHARLEMAGNE, PARIS.
From Vétault's "Charlemagne."

clared that he had repented of his unjust design. He would only ask them for their personal service against the heathen. This request is cheerfully granted; and King and barons ride off to the Saxon war together.

It will be observed that the first part of this animated story is based upon good historical tradition. The *Chanson des gestes* continually tantalise us in this manner. The authors of the longer poems worked into their fabric all the old material which fell in their way and seemed suitable. In works of so late a date as the *Chevalerie Ogier* and the *Gestes de Charlemagne devant Carcassonne et Narbonne*,* we find at intervals a touch of detail which appears to come direct from the ninth century. Sometimes we recognise an extant authority,—Eginhard, or the Limousin astronomer, or the *Acta Sanctorum*—often we are left to vain conjectures. Highly ingenious attempts have been made to separate the different strata of legend in particular groups of the cycle; especially in those dealing with the wars of Narbonne, and with the birth of Charlemagne. But our store of historical facts can hardly be said to have been augmented by these researches. Local feeling, the desire to compliment great families, the thirst for novelties, the utter disinclination to discriminate between true and false—all these influences have tended to confusion. And the confusion increases as the poems become more pretentious and more systematic. Raimbert

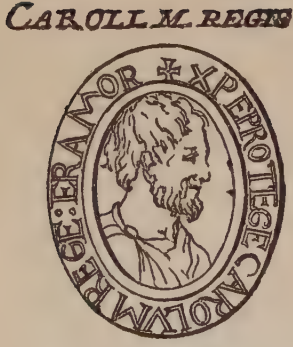
* This is a poem of the thirteenth century. It professes to be from the hand of Philomena, the secretary of Charlemagne.

of Paris, Adenés, Gerard of Amiens, Jean Bodel, and their anonymous compeers could lend interest to their already well-worn themes only by the lavish use of embroidery.

As the Charlemagne cycle reaches its completion in France it begins to find imitators in other lands. About the year 1150 Germany gives birth to the *Ruotlands Liet*, a free version of our *Chanson de Roland;* in the same century a metrical history of Charlemagne, containing an independent version of the war in Spain, is woven into the fabric of the *Kaisercronik*. In the fourteenth century a German poet paraphrases the tale of Charles Mainet. King Hakon, the destroyer of Norwegian heathenism, introduces the *Chansons des gestes* as a civilising influence among his countrymen. From Norway, Scandinavian translations find their way to Iceland and give birth to the Karlamagnus Saga. Spanish chroniclers, resenting the arrogance of their French neighbours, take up the tale of Roncevaux and the wars of Spain in order to prove that the Emperor is overrated. He was, they tell us, no deliverer, but a bandit. He attacked Alphonso the Chaste from ambition and was gloriously repulsed by Bernard de Carpio.* The Italians in a less serious spirit cast ridicule upon the chief events and personages of the cycle. In their hands Charlemagne becomes a dotard, Orlando a bombastic knight-errant. The nature of their treatment of the subject may be seen

* The *Cronica general d'España* compiled by, or at least under the direction of, Alphonso X. of Castile.

in the *Morgante Maggiore* of Luigi Pulci and the *Orlando Furioso* of Ariosto. In short, the legendary Charlemagne was a native of France; transported into other lands, he became a pale abstraction or a caricature.



CLASSICAL SEAL USED BY CHARLES.
(*Montfaucon.*)

EUROPE
and the
CAROLINGIAN EMPIRE
Scale of Miles
0 50 100 200 300 400
Empire of Charles the Great .... SAXONY
Dependencies .... BRITTANY
Eastern Empire .... Athens
Boundaries of Sub kingdoms of Aquitaine and Italy
FRISIA
SAXONY
OLD FRANCIA
AUSTRASIA
MIDDLE FRANCIA
KINGDOM OF CHARLES THE YOUNG
BURGUNDY
ALEMANNIA
BAVARIA
BOHEMIANS
MORAVIANS
AQUITAINE
DUCHY OF TOULOUSE
GASCONY
SEPTIMANIA
THE SPANISH MARK
EMIRATE OF CORDOVA
KHALIFATE OF BAGDAD
CORSICA
Sardinia
Sicily
CARINTHIANS
AVARS
THE MAGYAR TURKS
CARNIOLA
CROBATIANS
DALMATIA
SERBLIANS
BULGARIANS
SLAVONIC TRIBES
Theme of Macedonia
The Black Sea
Paris
Rome
Constantinople
Thessalonica
Corcyra
Lombardy
Brindisi
Amalfi
Messana
Rhegium
Catana
Syracuse
Lipari
Majorca
Minorca
Barcelona
Saragossa
Tortosa
Tarragona
Valencia
Ivica
Bordeaux
Toulouse
Marseilles
Genoa
Milan
Verona
Turin
Ravenna
Florence
Perugia
Naples
Salerno
Otranto
Nicopolis
Leucate
Cephalonia
Zacynthus
Corinth
Andros
Naxos
Chios
Scyros
Lesbos
Lemnos
Thasos
Rhodes

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